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[For information on the origins and traditional history of clans and phratries, see Categories 614 and 615.]

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[For information on the origins and traditional history of clans and phratries, see Categories 614 and 615.]

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782 at the temple, the head and carcase being placed in front
(784) of the image. The witness steps over the carçase, and this forms the oath. If the evidence is false, it is believed that some evil will happen to him."

101 The name Badaga or Vadugan means northerner, and
114 the Badagas are believed to be descended from Canarese colonists from the Mysore country, who migrated to the Nīlgiris three centuries ago owing to famine, political
141 turmoil, or local oppression in their own country. It is
144 worthy of notice, in this connection, that the head of the Badagas, like that of the Todas and Kotas, is dolichocephalic, and not of the mesaticephalic or sub-brachycephalic type, which prevails throughout Mysore, as in other Canarese areas.

	Average.		
	Cephalic length. cm.	Cephalic breadth. cm.	Cephalic index.
Badaga ...	18·9	13·6	71·7
Toda ...	19·4	14·2	73·3
Kota ...	19·2	14·2	74·1

Of the Mysorean heads, the following are a few typical examples :—

	Average.		
	Cephalic length. cm.	Cephalic breadth. cm.	Cephalic index.
Ganiga ...	18·5	14·3	77·6
Bēdar ...	18·3	14·3	77·7
Holeya ...	17·9	14·1	79·1
Mandya Brahman	18·5	14·8	80·2
Vakkaliga ...	17·7	14·5	81·7

539 Concerning the origin of the Badagas, the following legend is current. Seven brothers and their sisters were living on the Talamalai hills. A Muhammadan

539 ruler attempted to ravish the girl, whom the brother saved from him by flight. They settled down near the present village of Bethalhada. After a short stay there, the brothers separated, and settled in different parts of the Nīlgiris, which they peopled. Concerning the second brother, Hethappa, who had two daughters, the story goes that, during his absence on one occasion, two Todas forced their way into his house, ravished his wife, and possessed themselves of his wordly effects. Hearing of what had occurred, Hethappa sought the assistance of two Balayaru in revenging himself on the Todas. They readily consented to help him, in return for a promise that they should marry his daughters. The Todas were killed, and the present inhabitants of the village Hulikallu are supposed to be the descendants of the Balayaru and Badaga girls. The seven brothers are now worshipped under the name Hethappa or Hetha.

174 In connection with the migration of the Badagas to the Nīlgiris, the following note is given in the Gazetteer [175] of the Nīlgiris. "When this flitting took place there is little to show. It must have occurred after the foundation of the Lingāyat creed in the latter half of the twelfth century, as many of the Badagas are Lingāyats by faith, and sometime before the end of the sixteenth century, since in 1602 the Catholic priests from the west coast found them settled on the south of the plateau, and observing much the same relations with the Todas as subsist to this day. The present state of our knowledge does not enable us to fix more nearly the date of the [197] migration. That the language of the Badagas, which is a form of Canarese, should by now have so widely altered from its original as to be classed as a separate dialect argues that the movement took place nearer the twelfth than the sixteenth century. On the other hand, the

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764 corpse, and rapidly chanting the following lines, or a
783 variation thereof, while he waves his right hand during
(126) each line towards the feet. The reproduction of the
(123) recitation in my phonograph never failed to impress the daily audience of Badagas, Kotas and Todas.

• 539 This is the death of Āndi.
764 In his memory the calf of the cow Belle has been set free.
From this world to the other.
783 He goes in a car.
Everything the man did in this world.
All the sins committed by his ancestors.
All the sins committed by his forefathers.
All the sins committed by his parents.
All the sins committed by himself.
The estranging of brothers.
Shifting the boundary line.
Encroaching on a neighbour's land by removing the hedge.
Driving away brothers and sisters.
Cutting the kalli tree stealthily.
Cutting the mulli tree outside his boundary.
Dragging the thorny branches of the kotte tree.
Sweeping with a broom.
Splitting green branches.
Telling lies.
Uprooting seedlings.
Plucking growing plants, and throwing them in the sun.
Giving young birds to cats.
Troubling the poor and cripples.
Throwing refuse water in front of the sun
Going to sleep after seeing an eclipse of the moon.
Looking enviously at a buffalo yielding an abundance of milk.
Being jealous of the good crops of others.
Removing boundary stones.
Using a calf set free at the funeral.
Polluting water with dirt.
Urinating on burning embers.
Ingratitude to the priest.
Carrying tales to the higher authorities.

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539 Poisoning food.
764 Not feeding a hungry person.
783 Not giving fire to one half frozen.
Killing snakes and cows.
Killing lizards and blood-suckers.
Showing a wrong path.
Getting on the cot, and a'lowing his father-in-law to sleep on the ground.
Sitting on a raised verandah, and driving thence his mother-in-law.
Going against natural instincts.
Troubling daughters-in-law.
Breaking open lakes.
Breaking open reservoirs of water.
Being envious of the prosperity of other villages.
Getting angry with people.
Misleading travellers in the forest.
Though there be three hundred such sins,
Let them all go with the calf set free to-day.
May the sins be completely removed!
May the sins be forgiven!
May the door of heaven be open!
May the door of hell be closed!
May the hand of charity be extended!
May the wicked hand be shrivelled!
May the door open suddenly!
May beauty or splendour prevail everywhere!
May the hot pillar be cooled!
May the thread bridge * become light!
May the pit of perdition be closed!
May he reach the golden pillar!
Holding the feet of the six thousand Athis,
Holding the feet of the twelve thousand Pathis,
Holding the feet of Brahma,
Holding the feet of the calf set free to-day,
May he reach the abode of Siva!
So mote it be.

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* The bridge spanning the river of death, which the blessed cross in safety.

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(539)

The recitation is repeated thrice, and a few Badagas repeat the last words of each line after the elder. It was noticed by the Rev. A. C. Clayton that, during the recitation, the people surrounded the bier on three sides, leaving a lane open to the west. The sins of the dead man were transferred to another as sin-bearer, and finally passed away down the lane. As the ceremony witnessed by us differs materially from the account thereof given by Gover nearly forty years ago, I may quote his description. "By a conventional mode of expression, the sum total of sins a man may do is said to be thirteen hundred. Admitting that the deceased has committed them all, the performer cries aloud 'Stay not their flight to God's pure feet.' As he closes, the whole assembly chants aloud 'Stay not their flight.' Again the performer enters into details, and cries 'He killed the crawling snake. It is a sin.' In a moment the last word is caught up, and all the people cry 'It is a sin.' As they shout, the performer lays his hand upon the calf. The sin is transferred to the calf. Thus the whole catalogue is gone through in this impressive way. But this is not enough. As the last shout 'Let all be well' dies away, the performer gives place to another, and again confession is made, and all the people shout 'It is a sin.' A third time it is done. Then, still in solemn silence, the calf is let loose. Like the Jewish scapegoat, it may never be used for secular work." Dr. Rivers writes that "the Badagas let loose a calf at a funeral, to bear the sins of the deceased. It is possible that the calf in the Toda ceremony may have the same [171] significance. If so, the practice has not improbably been borrowed, and the fact that the bell which is hung on the neck of the calf is kept by Kotas or Badagas suggests that the whole incident may have been bor-

2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
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615 two before the Kumba:ra, Be:da and various Lingayat groupings.
[MN] This accords with a Badaga tradition that the very first group of migrants were three brothers of the Kasturi sept or clan, who came
173 from Ka:rahaḷḷi and settled in the Ke:ti Valley, Kundena:ḍu and Cinna Kunnu:r.[22] Later the eastern half of the plateau was settled by seven brothers, their sister and her husband. Later still yet other Gaudas went to Todana:ḍu and Me:kuna:ḍu divisions.

615 614 It is not impossible that the Kasturi Gaudas had the same Virashaiva origins as the Adikiris or Wodeas. Some hold the belief that they were at first vegetarians and Lingayats. As so often happened in legendary times a Kasturi tasted meat, for which his daughter made him give up his *liṅga* to her husband, a Lingayat Adikiri. Thereafter the Kasturis intermarried mainly with other Gaudas.[23] A comparable story maintains that some Gaudas of Neḍugula are descended from 'Koṅgaru', Wodeas of Selandi clan, after some fell away from their phratry's principles and were denied *liṅgas* when one of their youths ate meat to please a Gauda girl whom he loved.[24]

Kasturi ('musk'), we may note, is also the name of a sept among the Kanarese Okkaligas. (Thurston, 1909, Vol. I, 75, and Vol. III, 615 256; see below, p. 79). This too reflects the Gaudas' origin, (especially as many Badagas at the 1891 census enumeration gave their caste as Okkaliga).[25] Today, few Badagas agree to a connexion with the Okkaliga community, conceivably because there are now hundreds of poor Okkaligas on the Nilgiri Plateau, recent immigrants who work as labourers and with whom Badagas do not associate except as employers and landlords. A more likely explanation, however, is that enumerators in 1891 failed to discover that *okkaliga* merely means 'permanent resident' in Baḍagu and is not a clan or caste designation among them. Nonetheless there are informants in the Nilgiris and Ha:sanu:ru who agree to an origin among the Okkaligas of Mysore; and both communities share the same rather distinctive personal names.

There is an ancient settlement of Okkaligas in the Coimbatore Plain, for example at the village of Nellitore from which the Adikiris ascended the Nilgiri slopes. The legend of how they got to Nellitore is worth recounting.

● (539) ... Tippu Sultan wanted to marry an Okkaliga bride. The Okkaligas consented to it at first due to fear of the fanatic king, but subsequently decided to run away. So they dressed up a dog

2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
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615 • 539 like a bride, left it in the house and then ran away towards the south by the night. They were, it seems, chased by the Muslim troops but luckily there were floods in the river as soon as the Okkaligas crossed it. The Muslim troops finding it not possible to cross the river, returned to Mysore and the Okkaligas peacefully settled in the forest marginal areas (Nambiar & Bharathi, 1965, 3).

What is remarkable is that precisely the same legend, admittedly embellished with details from the Book of Exodus (xiv. 21–30), has been offered by Badagas both from the Nilgiris and Ha:sanu:ru to account for their flight from Mysore:

> About three hundred years ago one of the Moslem kings desired one of their daughters, and when she refused marriage he threatened to burn and plunder their villages. But the pride of the people was greater than their fear. To find one of their daughters in the harem of a Moslem dog was something that could not be tolerated...; and so, incited by their priests, they decided to escape.... With women, children, livestock, and all their cherished possessions, they swiftly escaped to the bank of a river which divided the wild tribes of the Nilgiris from the province of the sultan... a part of the army was hastily sent after the fleeing people, who were by that time near the banks of the Mayar, which formed the boundary. But how could they cross over? Strange to say,... the river parted and the followers reached the bank on the other side, while the disciples of the Prophet were suddenly swallowed up by the closing waters (trans. from Rhiem, 1900, 498).

615 As Nellitore is at the foot of the Nilgiri escarpment one is again led to suppose that some Badaga Gaudas derived from this Okkaliga caste. The probability is indeed high, for most Gaudas admit that they came from farming communities in the plains of Southern Mysore, where Okkaligas are today the dominant farming castes.

614 [615] Another important Gauda clan is called Maduve ('marriage') (also the name of a sept; see Diagram 4. Thurston, 1909, Vol. IV, 292). It was founded by a family of seven brothers led by one Aĉĉini, who fled from Talemale with a sister who was in danger of being ravished by a Moslem chieftain there (Belli Gowder, 1923–1941, 1; Miles, 1951, 69). 'Each of these brothers is said to

TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 301

3: Hockings, E-5 (1962-1963) 1968
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796 basket and goes to the bank of the stream, facing toward the sun. In one hand he holds a pot. The rest of the men do likewise, taking care to (292) stand downstream from the leader. Each has a handful of salt and a pot, and each wears a cotton shawl which leaves the entire right arm bare.

796 The leader (usually prompted in a whisper by some one else who knows it better) then pronounces the following prayer (pausing at the end of 782 each line, whereupon the rest of the party repeats the last word in lieu of saying the entire line over):

539 O Lord [Swami], we today celebrate things as our
fathers, grandfathers and forefathers have done.
782 Old is not new, and new is not old [i.e., old things
are not neglected, nor new things added].
796 Whatever we sow, may it grow more than ninefold.
Whichever female cattle conceive, may they give us
plenty of milk.
Whatever we put on the threshing ground, may it not be
wasted [i.e., may all the grain reach the store
without mishap].
O God, may the cow or young buffalo be impregnated by
the male just after getting its second teeth.
Just before getting its fourth teeth, may its calf walk.
May the house be filled with children, and may the pen
be filled with cattle.
Let everything be good. *Hau hau!*

The prayer is uttered in this fashion three times. At the end of the second recital the men shout "*hau hau*" twice, and at the end of the third they shout it at least three times, in expression of their happiness.

As the final words of this prayer are uttered, each man stoops beside the stream, still with his salt in one hand and pot in the other. He mixes the salt in the running water and catches some of this saline solution in the pot.

796 The leader then takes his pot of brine and pours it into the pit that he dug. The other men follow suit. Then all the cows and oxen, but not the 231 buffaloes, are driven to the pits to drink. When the animals have emptied a pit, more water is thrown in and further salt added without additional ceremony. Only after the cows and oxen wander away from these pits are the buffaloes finally allowed their drink of brine. A few of the men then refill their pots with water and pour it over the backs of the animals "to cool them."

796 When this phase of the proceedings is completed, each man fills his pot 648 with water again and then sits down in the grass nearby. At this point one or two Todas, who have been waiting for this moment, come forward and approach each Badaga in turn. The Badagas give most of the salt remaining in their baskets to these Toda friends.

796 After this, one of the Badagas goes to a dewberry bush and cuts off a 824 branch. This is regarded as a ritual, and is done with a small knife made by

(412)
(648)

3: Hockings E-5 (1962-1963) ,1968
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Great House precedes everyone else and afterwards announces for the benefit of others that he has completed his duty. Only after the water has been poured into his cattle pen may anyone go beyond the hamlet boundaries.

During the rest of the day, however, no one may do any outdoor work, not even something as trivial as picking up firewood. The permitted exceptions to this rule are that people may wash themselves and their clothes, and that the men may clean out their cattle sheds and prepare bedding for the cattle. Until recently a heavy fine was levied on anyone trying to do other kinds of work on this day.

This ceremony is generally considered by the Badagas to be one of the most important, or as some put it, "most sacred," in the entire calendar of festivals. That it should be so may seem surprising, in view of the unimportant role that cattle now play in the economy of this culture. We might expect that festivals celebrated at times of sowing or harvest would be the most significant for an agricultural community such as the Badagas. Yet the giving of salt is widely held to be quite as crucial as either the sowing or the harvest festival.

What, then, is it about giving salt to cattle that makes this event so essential to the festival calendar of this particular society? My answer would be that in the course of this ceremony a symbolic reference is made to all the roots of social stability and all the sources of the good life. Every society needs certain occasions when the bases of its organization and the ideals by which it lives are made visible to the members of that society. In this respect the Badagas are in no way unusual; the salt-giving is in fact a time when the whole community is busily engaged in acting out various roles which make the foundations of social life apparent to its members. Values which guide the community are thus paraded in the ceremony, a display which helps preserve them from doubt and obscurement.

A person's requirements for attaining the good life are summarized in the prayer which is spoken beside the stream. Here reference is made to maintaining long-established traditions, to having a plentiful harvest, to a superfluity of milk, and to the birth of many calves and children. The final line, "Let everything be good!" underlines the intent of the whole ceremony.

The Badagas themselves do everything possible on this occasion to ensure that things will in reality become "good" for them. They show due deference at every point to the living representative of their hamlet's founding family, who built the Great House and so started their community. They reward the Todas for their friendship and services. They pay brief respect to Ganga, the goddess who is represented in all streams and who controls rainfall. They pay respect to the sun, source of all light, by facing it before they stoop beside the stream. They show gratitude to the cattle, which are an important source of food and were formerly the indispensable laborers of every farmer. They ceremoniously gather specimens of two useful wild plants. Their route takes them to what have traditionally been the most sacred places in every Badaga hamlet: the Great House, the village green,

2 FEEDING AND CARING FOR THE BODY

•539

"Have a meal daily; wait to have other things."

(Proverb)

Types of Foodstuff

262 261 2.1. The common items in the Badaga diet are in many cases believed to have either a "heating" or a "cooling" effect on the body. It has thus been possibe to classify the common foodstuffs according to this effect (Table 2), which is an important factor in Badaga therapeutics as well as in the Ayurvedic system. There are however other items that are occasionally eaten, but which it has not been possible to classify in this manner. The peach-tinted pannicled mallow, for example, is a jungle plant with leaves that are sometimes cooked in curry. The citron is a wild fruit that can be used instead of lime for making into a pickle: it has to be kept a week after pickling before it is ready to eat. A wild nettle produces a tuber that is thought to be very nutritious (*Urticaria tuberosa*; Shortt 1868: 60), and a half-dozen other wild tubers are also eaten. Small birds are eaten if caught (but the local rodents and reptiles are not). Larger wild animals like pig, deer, "ibex," and even tiger are sometimes shot or trapped and then eaten, but leopard, buffalo and elephant, though common, are not. Some children like to eat charcoal. Doubtless there are other items that have escaped my notice because of the rarity of their use as food or because their occurrence is very localized.

[128] In Table 2 it will be noticed that the food items have been organized under some conventional subheadings of Western cuisine. This was done for the reader's convenience, and *does not* represent a Badaga taxonomy. It does however happen to underline how each basic category of Western food (e.g. meats, oils) is split by the heating/cooling categorization of the Badagas. The Western reader will

4: Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
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mouth (e.g. black pepper) are considered cooling by Badagas. Furthermore milk is somewhat heating, whereas buttermilk is cooling. Especially curious is the case of the hill gooseberry, which is a cooling food but is treated as heating because "it has many small seeds inside which dry in the bowels and so cause constipation." The best subjective explanation that I have been able to provide for the Badaga categorization is that the heating foods may be more indigestible than others, and hence have a greater tendency to cause heartburn. This is not however what informants told me, and I hesitate to venture the idea.

Preparation of Food

2.2. Badaga cuisine has two aspects to it: one is the preparation of a meal, the second is the preservation of food for its future use.

While Badagas do not have ovens, they have a variety of cooking techniques. A large pot with a rack fitted inside can be used like an oven for baking. Frying, boiling and roasting are the other cooking techniques. (One simple example of a delicacy made from the leaves of cabbage or prince's feather is as follows. The leaves are cut up fine and boiled in water; the water is then drained off. Oil or clarified butter is heated in another pot with onion, mustard and chili. These are cooked until they smell good, then the boiled leaves are added.)

Boiled rice and, until very recently, several millets, form the staple of each Badaga meal. A meal is not considered complete without a curry, however, to be eaten with the rice or millet. This is a vegetable curry more often than not, since even the meat-eaters who make up the great majority of the Badaga population are not able to have meat at every meal. A Badaga proverb reminds us, "If there is no taste in the sauce, will there be taste in the [curry] pieces?" Milk makes the food richer: "If the milk [in cooking is too] much, will the food be spoiled?"—obviously not. Butter is not recommended, however, because it may attack the lungs with "cold" unless it is first clarified by heating.

Eggs, less commonly cooked than mutton, are boiled, fried, or made into omelettes. Some people now eat them raw. Fish is rarely cooked by Badagas, largely because they dislike the smell and are afraid of the bones. (A fish-bone is dislodged from the throat by swallowing balls of boiled rice.) Badagas like their meat hot and peppery

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252 when they are drinking liquor with the meal. Mutton, pork and chicken and the occasional game animals are either roasted or stewed in a curry. It is said that in the early days mutton was simply burned in the fire for a while, till it was dry.

[263] Salt is generally used in cooking. ("If the curry is saltless, you can add salt; but if the salt has lost its savour, what can you add?")

251 Badaga women also used to salt and dry surplus meat, frying it later when it was needed. The practice has now stopped because hunting has virtually ceased. Dried meat and other foodstuffs which last a long time are generally prepared for use in the rainy season. Tiger flesh, for example, should first be soaked in salty water, and then the pieces left on a roof to dry in the sun for 5-8 days. Tiger, pork, "ibex"

[539] and deer meat will spoil if not properly cured, but kept for too long; hence the proverb: "If [dried meat] is threaded and tied it will be spoilt as curry pieces; if it is burnt and eaten the stomach will be spoiled." In pre-British days when men occasionally had to go on

[484] long trading expeditions they took a foodstuff prepared from wheat flour, salt and crude sugar, which was cooked by steaming and would keep for months.

Meals

264 2.3. There are several proverbs that refer to eating, especially to
539 the undesirable effects of over-eating. It is believed a person cannot work well if he eats too often: "A woman who eats once a day will be healthy; a woman who eats twice a day is healthy; a woman eating thrice daily will be chronically sick." And again, "He who controls his eating will not become sick; he who can control his talk will have no fights;" or alternatively, "Too much talking will end up in a quarrel; too much eating will end in short breath" (Metz 1864: 93). Greed is expressed in the adage: "One person is saying there is not even salt for the evening; another is saying [he wants] sugar for the afternoon." Similarly, "When you can afford to wait till the food is prepared, you can't wait till it gets cool."

262 Finally we can cite a proverb referring to the use of wild plants and
539 to dietary differences between the rich and the poor: "If it is eaten by a wealthy man, it is for medicine; if eaten by a poor man, it is because he has nothing else for his stomach." It is felt one should work hard and eat well enough: "If there is mud on the hand, there is curd in the mouth."

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Badagas typically eat twice daily, once in the morning around eight o'clock and then again in the evening (Gaymard 1924: 3).[1] Each meal consists usually of two courses, the first being a curry, probably of vegetables, eaten with rice or millet. The second course, providing a third of the bulk of the meal, is curd or buttermilk. Usually with this latter course people eat a teaspoonful or so of hot lime relish, made with limes, chilies and salt. Despite the ground chilies it is "neutral" in its heating effect, and is said to dispel a disease characterized by dizziness, nausea and vomiting. At other times of the day Badagas "drink coffee, which because of the cold climate is a necessity for them and not a luxury" (Vivekanandam Pillai 1937: 247). The tedium of these meals is relieved by occasional sweets made from crude sugar, honey, or high-quality millets. Fruits are always appreciated too: "Who died by eating a jackfruit? Who expanded by eating a banana?"

The usual meal and its preparation have been described in these terms:

> The women pound regularly every day in their mortars of stone... a kind of millet, which forms the basis of the daily alimentation. The grain thus decorticated is boiled and served. They sit down on the floor...and...with the fingers of the right hand they crush these boiled grains and dip them in a sauce mostly composed of pepper, mustard and coriander; of this spiced mixture they make little balls of which they consume a number according to their appetite.
>
> Sometimes the housewives prepare cakes of cornflour boiled and mixed with honey and milk. Butter is used for seasoning (Tignous 1911: 116-17).

In most Badaga homes each Monday, the weekly holiday, and in the more well-to-do ones on both Mondays and Fridays, a woman should not cook ordinary green vegetables for the curry but make a richer meal, using beans and peas and, if non-vegetarian, some meat for the dish. A similarly rich dish should be prepared for a

[1]Readers who may be confused by my apparent use of an "ethnographic present" here and throughout the book should know that *if I put a statement in the present tense it is to the best of my knowledge currently valid, and if I follow it with a citation date, such as 1924, it was also noted at that time.*

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252 visiting affine, for otherwise he will conclude that he is not welcome
[574] in the house. One should eat with one's relatives: "If eaten with ten
people it is milk; if eaten by oneself it is shit." Several proverbs
252 suggest that not all affines are to be made welcome, though: "Is it
539 a bad thing for the affine who has become ruined and came [to us to
eat] a poor quality of finger millet and sour buttermilk?" The use-
less housewife is one who is too lazy to cook regularly: "Not caring
about her husband's hunger, a bad wife will eat the old food herself
[rather than cook]."

Earth-eating

261 2.4. The eating of earths is widespread in South India (Hooper and
Mann 1906: 254). We find that the practice has been reported in
particular from the part of Mysore whence the Badagas fled in the
sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and that a baked edible clay is
even sold in the bazaars there (Thurston 1901: 121; Hooper and
Mann 1906: 256). In that part of Mysore the consumption of raw or
baked clay was fairly common among women especially, and was
said to bring no ill effects. An informant did however state that
261 among chronic earth-eaters "their appearance suggests that they
164 are suffering from pernicious anaemia, the face being unnaturally
swollen or puffed and the abdomen distended, while the limbs are
shrunk except at the joints, which appear enlarged and are said to
be painful" (Thurston 1901: 121). Early medical officers reported
on the dire consequences of habitual earth-eating, especially men-
tioning anaemia and dysentery (Hooper and Mann 1906: 263-70).
[165] It has not been possible to discover whether the high death-rate due
to dysentery among Badagas (see 9.7) can be attributed in part to
this habit. Hooper and Mann (1906: 254) reported the practice as
261 widespread throughout India, and as chiefly confined to labourers
[171] and pregnant women, including Badagas. The practice is common
amongst them, pregnant women being especially fond of the earth,
even though older people abuse them for eating it because they do
not think it a foodstuff. The earth, said to have a pleasant taste and
smell, is yellowish-brown in colour, and is called *suttekal*. It is actual-
ly a weathered feldspar, chemically aluminium silicate, and is the
261 same thing as kaolin. Humans do of course need traces of aluminium
146 in their diet. Dietary deficiency where soils are heavily leached might
thus explain the practice; as it perhaps does the eating of charcoal

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between the two, or between a father and his daughter, has often led to a divorce.

In the estimate of one good informant, when incest occurs within the family it is most often with an elder brother's wife, and less commonly with a son's wife or with the father's second wife when she is a man's stepmother. Mother/son, father/daughter and brother/sister relations are the rarest of all, if indeed they ever occur.

The above seven types of illicit relationship are listed in my informant's order, going from (*a*) the most common but least serious, to (*g*), the most uncommon and offensive. Despite the considerable amount of evidence collected on these various types, I was told by old people that it used to be thought a very bad thing for a husband to commit adultery, and if his wife or another person found out about it she would go to the village headman who would call a meeting of the council and then fine the guilty person: in adultery the man was always at fault.

Among Badagas the public attitude towards a cuckolded husband is that he is a foolish, weak and lazy man, for otherwise his wife could not have been led astray. However, his wife also loses all respect with the other village women, who may well fear that they could lose their own husbands to her too. Nor can the adulterous man expect any accolades for his behaviour. Today a case of adultery may go before a council, which can still fine the adulterer; or her husband may quietly divorce an adulterous wife; or he might give the adulterer a beating, provided he had some alternate explanation for it to offer his neighbours.

Attitudes towards extra-marital love and prostitution are clearly expressed in Badaga proverbs and legends. Witness the following still current proverbs: "Three things are equal to each other: a harlot, an adulterer, and a piece of ground which is always in danger of being washed away by a river" (Metz 1864: 97); "If the food is spoiled, the day is spoiled; if the wife is spoiled, one's life is spoiled;" "The immoral woman will not believe her own husband;" "The whoremonger will vanish away like a handful of wind" (Metz 1864: 98); and again, "Lust is deceitful, I have lost my blanket through it" (Metz 1864: 96). A few lines from an epic poem conjure up a vision of limbo that is worthy of Dante's *Inferno :*

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'Oh brother, who are these
Most wretched of them all?
In naked shame they're bound
To rugged gnarled trees.
They ever seem to talk,
But none are there to hear.'
'Oh sister, you surely have heard who these are:
Abandoned and profligate women, who wandered astray
From virtue and home. They have nothing wherewith
To cover their shame. They are hungry and cold.' (Gover 1871: 85).

In short, there was a touch of puritanism in Badaga oral literature that was apparently more honoured in the breach than in the observance.

The Consummation of Marriage

128 3.8. The early part of this chapter has summarized some of the kinds of sexual activity and instruction that precede marriage. It is now time to analyze the sexual behaviour that accompanies a wedding. In doing so we shall not consider the symbolic aspects of the ceremony nor its sociological features; save only to mention that hamlets are exogamous, and the preferred bride is the daughter of one's father's sister, or otherwise a mother's brother's daughter is almost equally acceptable. In the Toreya phratry alone marriage with a sister's daughter is permissible, though infrequent. An ethnographic account of Badaga marriage may be found in Thurston (1909: 103-09).

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583 In the nineteenth century a form of trial marriage was engaged in.
584 A young man might then approach a girl's parents, and if they liked him they would invite him to their house, where he would be feasted and allowed to sleep with the girl. In the morning she would express her opinion of the youth to her parents, and her mother would then signal to him the family's decision, by giving him a meal of curried meat or similarly rich fare if he was acceptable, or otherwise just some boiled rice with a watery vegetable relish. "The same freedom, however, that on the following morning is allowed to the female, is also allowed to the youth; and should any change have taken place in his inclinations, he walks away without further ceremony" (Hark-

truate, I was told, until 18 or 19, long after they have married.) Husbands thus attach little importance to presence or absence of a hymen. A bride is nonetheless supposed to be a virgin on her first marriage, and so on the morning after her defloration her parents-in-law look for a bloodstain on the bed. If she is not in fact a virgin one of the couple will usually draw a little blood from some part of the body so as to make a stain. Whether or not the groom is responsible for her previous loss of virginity he will want a bloodstain to be found, for otherwise his parents may think he has fallen in love with a loose, unworthy girl. Badagas proverbially take a dim view of young women: "A young ox and a young girl are both inconstant: do not trust them" (Metz 1864: 94).

They have a kind of second wedding ceremony, held at about the seventh month of a girl's first pregnancy. The sexual aspect of this second ceremony is that on the following night the couple are supposed to sleep together and have intercourse. While the pregnant girl is not impure at the time of the actual ceremony, both she and her husband are considered so on the following morning. It is a ritual requirement that she carry all of their bedding to some stream, but not the usual water source, and wash it clean.

3.10. Badaga men, and less commonly women, can get a disease called *kanne no:* ("first sickness"), which is caused either by a young man's first sexual experience or by too much sexual activity in his early married years. It is a relatively rare illness, recognizable from the face and the accompanying fever. A patient is served only "cooling" foods till he recovers; he rests at home, and is also given *kodangu soppu* (made from velvety patchouli, etc.) as for any fever. The parents stop the couple from sleeping together for the time being; until fully recovered the patient will be permitted little or no coitus by his elders. This illness is said to be quite dangerous, whereas "too little" intercourse is not thought to have any bad effect on the body.

Menstrual Practices

3.11. Badaga therapists do not know why menstruation occurs, and simply attribute it to God's will. The intervals can vary, I was told, from 16 to 40 days, tending to be shorter in fat women. Among young women menses occurs every 18, 19 or 20 days, with 22 days as perhaps the maximum. With older women the period comes on

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till morning but must be completed at every house, no matter how late the hour. If necessary the girl must even knock on doors and waken people. Everyone should bless her, as her own mother has already done, with a formula wishing her: "May you, my darling, soon receive a husband, bring forth a son, build your own house and live happy" (Natesa Sastri 1892: 761; Francis 1908: 131). From this time onward the girl is really a full-fledged member of the village community. There is a rule, no longer followed, that she should now bow down to any visitor from another hamlet, whether a man or woman. More importantly she is now recognized as being ready for marriage. Traditionally her forehead would be tattooed a few days later, leaving a visible sign of her marriageability (Natesa Sastri 1892: 760; Francis 1908: 131).

3.13. The menstrual hut (*holagudi*—"pollution place") was an important institution in the lives of adult women. They were customarily secluded there for a period of five to seven days (Thurston 1909: 103; "Miles" 1933: 74). If a woman discovered her condition before washing in the morning, that day would be considered the *third* of seven days of pollution. To be more exact: in calculating those days, the second day of observable menstruation is counted as the third; but if the onset is noticed before sunrise then that same day is already counted as the nominal third day. This habit of mind is expressed in the proverb: "If dying today, it will be three days by tomorrow." Thus the entire menstrual period would cover five or six days, and not seven as informants may assert. It was the custom that on the real third day of her five secluded days a woman would bathe in cold water using bark of pellitory as soap. On the fourth day she was to repeat this bath, but could then put on a change of clothing, leave the hut, and spend part of the night on her own veranda. After cooking and eating her evening meal there she would bathe again and could then enter the outer, less sacred room of the house. Early next morning the spot where she slept was cleaned, and the woman bathed in the stream. Then she would return home, eat her meals in the outer room, and remain there until next morning, the sixth actual day, when the pollution period would terminate. During the entire period no one may touch a menstruating woman. Should a child nonetheless do so he must be washed to remove the pollution before he comes into contact with anyone else.

It was customary for women to use a kind of sanitary pad in the menstrual hut, made out of shredded bark and leaves ("Miles"

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about to receive food, she brought a pot outside, left it on the ground, and stepped back about five meters while the visitor poured her foodstuffs into the pot. This was in fact the usual way of giving food to untouchables in South India. As women did not expect very good food in the menstrual hut they tended to fill themselves up before leaving home: "The eye of the ox which has been ploughing is on the village; the eye of a woman just before menses is on the hearth." A more rambunctious proverb states: "The woman who has not eaten is like the one in the menstrual hut; the woman who does not fart is like summer"—summer being a rather uncomfortable period.

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Adult Sexual Activity

3.15. Badaga society seems to be more tolerant of sexual escapades, whether within or beyond the bonds of marriage, than is usually recorded as the case in other Hindu communities. Thus a frustrated missionary reported: "Badaga women, who have not come much into contact with Christianity, freely express their disgust at the miserable condition of Christian women, who are bound to one husband only!" (Anonymous 1894: 547). A proverb still heard on the lips of Badaga men expresses their exasperation with womenfolk: "A passionate wife is as bad as a house that leaks" (Metz 1864: 94). Yet there is little of the double standard of morality that separates the sexes in orthodox Hindu and Muslim India. Badagas of both sexes enjoy coitus, a factor that is essential to procreation, for they believe that unless a couple are properly satisfied by the act the woman will not conceive. Ignorance of the physiological facts of paternity is evidenced from the belief expressed by older informants that, if either husband or wife is contemplating divorce and remarriage, then pregnancy cannot occur even though they still have intercourse. Nevertheless they do believe that a foetus grows out of the semen in the womb, and it is fed by blood coming from the mother's belly (10.13). In those situations where a couple are satisfied but no pregnancy ensues, it is assumed that some sin has been committed by either the couple or their ancestors.

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Despite this emphasis on the pleasurable aspect of sex, much coitus is reported to occur for other reasons. When a couple have been working hard all day in the woods or fields they really feel the need for total rest throughout the night. Yet they may still have inter-

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In a similar arrangement an old man's younger brother slept with the new wife and begot children who were treated as her husband's. Such practices now seem to have stopped. "Children for an older man are a weight on his shoulder," says the proverb.

3.16. In keeping with the idea that intercourse should satisfy a couple, Badagas are familiar with a variety of coital approaches—although nothing like that described in the *Kama Sutra*. The psychological benefits of making love are acknowledged in a proverb: "[If husband and wife are] not on good terms before midnight, they will play after midnight."

Badagas customarily take a bath before having sexual relations, and under normal conditions are both nude when making love. Older couples are generally naked in bed, but nowadays the younger people wear pyjamas or underwear. Young men, particularly if educated in a city, know how to use foreplay to get a woman excited. Until European films were seen in the Nilgiris, however, mouth-kissing was not indulged in, although men did kiss and bite the neck, cheeks and breasts of their women. Inside the house the normal position for intercourse is lying on a bed, but if they have to hurry the couple will use a standing position or stoop over something, with the man entering from behind, as indeed they do when in the forest. Parents may have relations in the same bed their children are sleeping in, in which case they will lie on their sides during intercourse. Curiously, a couple can do this with their baby lying beside them, and it will not be affected by the "bad wind" of coitus; whereas if they do it in another room they must not come near their baby until they have cleaned themselves and put on fresh clothes, for fear that the baby will be affected. Furthermore, if they also have some older children they may take them into the same bed with the baby before having intercourse in that very bed; the belief here being that even though the other children are weaned they too could be affected by this very dangerous "wind" if they were sleeping in another room. Young couples with no children generally sleep in a small room by themselves, on the end of the veranda. If their ageing parents live with them, the couple may leave the inner room to them and sleep under the wide shelf in the outer room. Otherwise a couple will occupy the inner room at night. If a man has two wives he usually has relations with one in the presence of the other, all three sharing the same bed.

Although a young bride should be the first to get up in the morn-

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Fertility and Infertility

3.17. A basic problem of public health administration—to control the abundant fertility of Indian and other Asian populations—has never been taken for a problem by the Badaga community. Even though their population has increased from 2,207 in 1812 to 104,392 in 1971 their village leaders are only now beginning to perceive that such a staggering increase (4,730 per cent in 160 years) has to be curtailed. Sons were of course valued in a farming community in a frontier-like situation, and long after swidden agriculture had ceased and the amount of farmland stabilized people still thought in terms of having a number of sons for security. This entailed on the average having the same number of daughters. ("Even though you repeatedly tell her, she is only delivering girls," a proverb bemoans.) And as standards of public hygiene slowly increased so too did the excess of births over deaths. In various prayers Badagas still ask: "May the house be filled with children!" In contrast, however, one proverb acknowledges that, "The mother who has given birth to ten children [is almost like someone] dead from having fallen in the lake." Another traditional proverb counsels: "Rather than deliver ten pigs [i.e., unscrupulous children], deliver one [good child] Nandi." In the 600 households of my sample the average nuclear family had 3.7 children.

For Badagas then, the more important problem is infertility. Several lady therapists have built their reputations on their abilities to cure or at least to predict a woman's barrenness. In some marriages, as we have seen, the apparent infertility is an effect, in the Badaga's view, of the couple thinking about divorce and hence not satisfying each other through intercourse. "Treatment" for infertility will be discussed in more detail below (6.62).

The commonest solution for an infertile marriage is for the woman to bring her younger sister into the home as a second wife. Should the latter prove infertile too their natal family is considered accursed: the thought that the problem might lie with the husband does not arise. If the barren wife does not supply a substitute she is usually sent home to her parents. Her fate then, if she is lucky, will be to marry a widower who needs a woman's labour in the house but who already has his children (Jagor 1876: 200). Nowadays childless couples tend to follow the South Indian practice of visiting distant temples on pilgrimage, and promising to give the gods something when they have been blessed with a son.

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month, or else have a difficult delivery during the ninth month and produce a lean, unhealthy baby. 843

If the woman's eyes turn red, she gets diarrhoea, feels uneasy, and her lips are itchy, these signs indicate that she indeed has too much "heat" in the body, and that she is not having food regularly or in enough quantity. If there is a lot of "heat" she will have heartburn before or after meals, and will cough; but the excess "heat" can only be noticed by any of these signs, not by feeling the actual temperature of the body.

The "heat" can be reduced by feeding the patient buttermilk or butter. In an extreme case she can be given a special mixture. [272] Lime juice is put in a pot, and buffalo milk is milked directly from the animal onto the juice, and then drunk immediately. (Cow's milk can be used instead, but is not so effective.) This drink is given to her every morning for two or three weeks, before she takes any food.

In the fourth, sixth and seventh months the woman can be carefree. In even numbered months, the fourth, sixth and eighth, she may cross the hamlet boundary and visit her father's house, provided she does not stay there overnight. In odd-numbered months, the fifth, seventh and ninth, she can stay there overnight.

4.4. At an odd-numbered month, generally the fifth or seventh month of a girl's first pregnancy only, she and her husband go through a ceremony that confirms their marriage. This occurs on a day after the new moon and before the full moon; it must be an auspicious day—a Monday, Friday, Wednesday or Sunday, in that order of preference. Although no mention is made of the pregnancy, everyone is aware that it has led to a stable marriage and the woman is no longer a mere servant of the man: "For the woman without children there is no house; for the man without an ox there is no place" (Verghese 1963: 422). Hence the ceremony: 843 585 851 [777] [581] [539]

> . . . it seals the marriage contract, and, after its performance, divorce can only be obtained through the decree of the panchāyat (tribal council). Moreover, if it has not been performed, a man cannot claim the paternity of the child . . . The husband and wife are seated in the midst of those assembled . . . and the former asks his father-in-law whether he may throw the thread round his wife's neck, and, having received permission, proceeds to do so . . . On the day of the ceremony, the man

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butter, palm sugar, and several limes will always be required and the husband should have purchased them a few days beforehand. Even the black peppers and other ingredients for the special curry given the woman after her delivery must all be provided by her husband. However, it is common nowadays for the girl's father to buy all of these materials, and her husband to reimburse him in cash.

4.9. In the old days delivery occurred only on the veranda, and never in the house, because it was an impure act. There were no separate menstrual huts for this, as with the neighbouring Kotas. Now the birth generally takes place in one of the outer rooms of the house. Some women even give birth in the inner, more sacred room, while others go to a hospital. In the old days however a screen of planks or blankets would be erected on the veranda to protect the woman from wind and cold; for then as now her body was bare during the delivery. A loincloth is simply put over her shoulders for a little warmth. Now that the event occurs inside the house though, the door is closed to keep in the heat.

When the woman starts to labour, people in her house call for a village midwife, who takes charge of the situation. It is said that in the old days the grinding stone was in front of the woman for her to hold on to. Nowadays, following their experience in hospitals, some women are delivered lying flat on their backs on the floor, with face upwards. More usually the woman kneels on the ground, with a girl in front of her to support her. Her legs are apart, and an experienced midwife is behind her to catch the baby before it falls onto the floor. During the actual delivery the midwife checks that the umbilical cord is not around the baby's neck. In some instances gingelly oil is applied to the vagina to ease the delivery. (This is referred to in a proverb about there being an appropriate time and place for everything: "It is like delivering a child where oil is seen.")

In the old days midwives knew how to put a hand inside and pull the baby out, and some can still do this (after carefully cutting their nails and washing the hands): it is only done as a last resort with a difficult delivery, though. Before that in a difficult case the midwife feels the surface of the stomach to tell if the baby is in the wrong position. If it is, then the mother is made to place her head on the pounding stone, and five or six women support her as she balances there, upside down with her legs held up in the air. Then

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not savour the idea of that; (although if it happens nothing in particular follows). Should the infant die shortly afterwards, before it has been named, it too is treated as afterbirth material and buried at the usual cemetery. If someone asks the mournful family who has died, the answer must be "No one."

4.13. For the first day or two after birth the mother is given a hot bath four or five times daily. Up till this time she cannot bathe herself, but must have some woman help her. After that time she bathes herself in hot water, twice daily until 25 to 30 days after delivery, and thereafter once daily. Always, the water used is hot. The baby is given a bath three times daily for the first eight days, then twice a day till the nineteenth day, and thereafter once daily, in the evening only.

In the old days, the newly delivered mother was given a special preparation of little millet. This was first baked, and then boiled till it was a mushy porridge (Birch 1838: 104). Now she eats a non-liquid curry. For that peppercorns are fried in a clarified butter, then ground up on the curry grinder. Then some garlic is fried, and salt, tamarind and clarified butter mixed with it while it is kept warm beside the fire. A limited amount of this food is given to the mother twice daily until the fourth or fifth day after delivery, by an old woman who will restrict the quantity even though the mother might want more. Thereafter, for the next 20 to 40 days, according to the state of the mother's health, she continues with this as her morning meal, but in the evenings has paddy rice and lentil soup. She can take a small amount of milk, even from the day of her delivery. This can only be cow's milk, and must be boiled before drinking. It is recognized that a woman who has given birth may appear weak and ugly, and repeated births can lead to ill-health. A proverb puts it this way: "The appearance of a woman who has just given birth to one child is like the appearance of a heifer which has given birth that day."

No woman who has given birth may touch any household utensils till the third, fifth, seventh or ninth day after the first full or new moon, I was told; alternatively it has been reported that she must first see the crescent moon before the period of pollution can end (Thurston 1909: 109). She should be given no work for eight days before or eight days after her delivery: during that fortnight her husband must provide for all her needs, even if he is on the point of divorcing her. It used to be that after five, seven,

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nine or 15 days she might begin to work in the house again (Jagor 1876: 199). Earlier yet, for her first birth, a woman would stay in the pollution hut until the next waning of the moon. In later confinements she would remain in the hut for only three days (Birch 1838: 104). The mother of twins, even if poor, should however stay at home looking after them for at least three months, without doing any outside work.

"A girl who has delivered is a good sight; a field with good crops is a good sight," according to one proverb. Within a month of the birth, on an auspicious day, mother and child return to her husband's house. The party must number (including both of them) at least five persons, and must be of an odd number unless it exceeds 21.

> On arrival there, the infant is placed near the feet of an old man standing by a lamp within the milk-house. Placing his right hand over the head of the infant, the old man blesses it, and a feast is held, before the commencement of which two cups, one containing milk, and the other cooked rice, are produced. All the relations take up a little of the rice and milk, and touch the tongue of the baby with them. (Thurston 1909:109)

If a woman becomes pregnant for the twentieth time by the same husband (a previous marriage does not count), then, whether all the offspring are living or not, the couple go right through the wedding and seventh-month-of-pregnancy ceremonies again. These are performed on a lavish scale, even if the husband has to borrow substantially.

The Form and Sex of the Child

4.14. A proverb asks, "If a mother gives birth to a male child, will the father object to it?" Obviously he will not, since it is a blessing to the family (Verghese 1963: 420). The same idea is also expressed thus: "By delivering a son she is like a prima donna standing on a vantage point and calling out;" or "The man who has begotten a son and the man who has planted a coconut [tree] will not spoil." Another saying puts it quite succinctly: "A strong boy, a weak girl;" and yet another emphasizes that girl babies are not much wanted: "Even though you repeatedly tell her, she is

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only giving birth to girls." Another states: "If a girl is begotten she is useless; if a boy is begotten he is an asset." Yet another proverb puts it thus: "Girls are a disappointment, but the eldest son is like a hearth." Daughters are accordingly cared for less well than sons during infancy, particularly if the couple already have several daughters. Nonethelesss there is no evidence of the female infanticide that used to be practised by Todas.

> The Badagas will welcome the birth of a son or a daughter with equal gladness. The most probable reason for this is that while Hindus see an increasing burden and expense with the hbirt of a daughter, the Badagas see a future livelihood because the daughter as well as the son helps in the fields. (Rhiem 1900: 503)

Even if they are a blessing, "One who has given birth is seven times as ill-fated as one who is without children:" they can be very troublesome!

If a child is deformed since before the birth, that is God's will and nothing can be done about it; but if any damage was done to the baby during the delivery, that can perhaps be rectified. Immediately after the delivery the midwife checks that all the limbs are in order, and at this time can squeeze the head to make it rounder if it seems very long, or can pinch up the nose if it looks flattened.

If a child is born deformed but living, it is believed that either its parents or its patrilineal ancestors committed some great sin; whereas if the deformed child is born dead no such sin was involved. Many Badagas are born with eleven fingers or toes; but this minor matter is considered to be neither lucky nor inauspicious. Badly deformed children of either sex are still encouraged to live and are not done away with; this is even more true of twins, who bring more respect to the parents than a single birth would. However, children blind or deformed from birth are extremely rare, and giants are unknown among the Badagas; dwarfs occasionally are found. One man, about a metre high, was briefly married and divorced, was a highly respected man who took an active part in the village council, and died in his sixties. He was nicknamed "Groundling" but was respected because his conduct was excellent and he came from a good family. He had several brothers of normal stature but was respected more than they were.

5 CHILD CARE

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"Pacifying the children is no less of a job than digesting the raw flesh of an animal."
(Proverb)

Feeding the Infant

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5.1. In Chapter 4 I have described the actions which immediately follow an infant's arrival in the world. There we saw how the newborn child sucks his mother's breast for the first time, and [778] then swallows a small piece of bezoar. This is only one of several substances that he may be offered in the first few days of life. It has been reported that another buffalo product used to be given a day or two after birth, but its identity is uncertain; some identify it with bezoar, others with asafoetida, which is in fact a resinous vegetable substance. After a few days, when the child's stool is not yellow, some burnt rhizome of the sweet flag is also fed to the baby, mixed with mother's. (Jagor 1876: 199). Somewhat later in [788] life children were sometimes taken on pilgrimage to the temple at Ka:ramaḍai, near the eastern foot of the Nilgiris, where they were fed a particularly unsavoury medicinal foodstuff. Here during the annual festival for the goddess Ma:riamma mendicants were given consecrated pieces of banana mixed with crude sugar. These they chewed a little, then spat into the hands or mouths of devotees, who ate this or fed it to their children because it was believed to cure all diseases ("Miles" 1933: 267).

5.2. Mother's milk is the best food for a baby, better than any animal's milk. The child should be weaned at one year, particularly as the mother may be pregnant again by then. Some mothers [862] naturally have little milk; with others the flow of milk may stop if

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853 751 783 A woman affected by a "bad wind" of any kind can counteract it by going out beyond the territorial boundaries of her village and then returning, on the way finding the two plants *moḷḷe muttu giḍu* and cardamom. She should rub them together in her palms, adding a little water and rabbit dung. Then if she swallows this preventive mixture before nursing the child it will not be affected by the "bad wind."

853 757 755 5.5. There are two medicines that can be administered to a mother if her milk stops flowing because of some frightening experience. The first one applies if her baby is less than four or five months old. The therapist sitting with the mother has a whole lime in one hand and with it some sacred ash (*vibuṭi*) or occasionally wood ash. She moves the lime around clockwise (from her viewpoint) in front of the mother, while saying: "If there is any bad air, or if she has had a fright, may the milk now flow!" The sacred ash is then smeared on the mother's brow and she eats a little of it too. Next the lime is cut in half, and the mother drinks its juice. This procedure is followed every morning for three days. If the baby is older than four months another medicine is given instead. Half a glass of the juice of the cockspur flower is drunk by the mother before each morning meal, for three or five consecutive days.

862 5.6. Before weaning the child is already being fed by hand by some relative and this continues until at about four or five years he feeds himself from a separate plate or leaf. From the start of the third month of life, and certainly before the start of the fifth month, the baby is given solid food. In earlier times more than today this was a good quality of little millet; now good rice is more usual. It is mixed with water or cow's milk—but not buffalo's—and boiled in a small pot (*kuḍikke*) used only for this purpose. A pinch of salt is added and perhaps some butter or clarified butter. The baby is given this once daily during the first month of eating, and thereafter twice daily.

539 862 One proverb exhorts people to be generous in feeding enough to the children: "Neither should the rice become half, nor the sister's children become weak." Or sarcastically, "See that person dance with half-empty stomach!" (Metz 1864: 97). Another refers however to the greediness of some children: "If you give a child, which has scarcely spoiled flour to eat, a cake, it will ask sugar to put upon it" (Metz 1864: 96).

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Principles of Child Care

5.7. Underlying the practice of caring for children are certain core values about the human body which Badaga encapsulate in a few proverbs and can sometimes be persuaded to talk about. What some of these proverbs point to is a need to accept human diversity, and even deformity. One asks rhetorically, "Will all begotten children be real children?" And another proverb makes the same comment in reference to dissimilarities between siblings: "The stomach that has given birth to various people is one; those people are of different sense and different complexion." Similarly, "Are there five even fingers ?" Deformities in children are not of course welcomed—"It is bad if you have a lame child; it is bad if you see a blind man"—yet the individual should not feel embarrassed about a defect: "After the boils have formed, what if you feel shy and repugnant about them ?" Chronic illness also has to be tolerated in relatives and treated: "Even if she coughs she is our woman; even if she looks thin she is a grander woman."

Several proverbs reflect a concern with that hardy anthropological question, the relative strength and influence of nurture and of nature in the individual's personality: "Even if one has forgotten one's own begotten children, one won't forget learnt [bad] habits;" the latter are more important than inborn senses. Indeed, some people would go blind rather than give up a bad habit: "Even if your eyes become black a learnt [bad] habit won't disappear." In direct contrast, though, "Inborn habits won't go away even if you burn a man." Badagas believe that inborn habits (*huttu buddi*) are permanent, whereas learnt ones (*katta buddi*) are not.

A number of proverbs relate to the family relationships that involve children, and the way youngesters should be brought up. A certain firmness is counseled: "Children should be brought up under control, and a disobedient wife should have been sent back home." Similarly, "It is said, if the children are to be good, the mother should be good enough [herself]". Badagas believe that children acquire their qualities from the mother. Even so, "That woman will not know the nature of the girl she gave birth to." Kindness and forgiveness are valued in dealing with children. Thus, "If we caress the head of an orphan boy, our own children will grow up of their own accord" (Metz 1864: 94); "Will a child die from the stripes of a mother ?" (Metz 1864: 97); "Cats and

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539 855 children are the same"—in that they cannot be properly controlled and so should be exempted from the rules of the household. And again: "If the child shits on your thigh, will you cut it right off?" It is recognized that bringing up children is no easy task: "Pacifying the children is no less a job than digesting the raw flesh of an animal" (Verghese 1963: 423).

Infancy

854 5.8. The socialization of the infant may have to begin with the education of the mother. Three or four days after the delivery she starts bathing the baby herself, but if this is her first child she will usually be helped for a couple of weeks by her own mother until she has learnt the correct procedure. No swaddling or tying of the child occurs (Jagor 1876: 199), but it is bundled up in old rags to keep it warm. As a proverb explains, "The child will grow fast with old rags, and the buffalo will grow fast with dung." It is for this reason that a pregnant woman keeps all old cloth. (More usually rags are made into pillows or bedding, or used at menstruation; and woollen rags are kept for bandages.) The child should always be kept in warm cloths, for it is believed that if his temperature is high it can be reduced to normal, but if it is lower than normal he cannot raise it. In the old days when no woollens were available, babies were covered with cotton folded to eight or ten thicknesses for greater warmth. Only used cloth is allowed, which is why the old rags are preserved; but if someone wants to give a baby a new cloth one of the parents should first wear it a little and rub it on the body so that it can be considered used.

825 5.9. Care is taken to keep a baby's face clean, especially during the first 40 or 50 days, when a cat might otherwise find milk on its face and either suffocate the baby or do it some harm.

539 514 It is accepted as natural that the nose often gets dirty: as a proverb puts it, "So long as the nose exists, won't there be mucus oozing from it?" As was mentioned earlier (2.11), the method of cleaning a baby's nose is to suck it and spit the mucus out. (If a woman has been chewing tobacco she washes her mouth out before doing this.) This method is considered more gentle than squeezing the nose; but after a child has reached six months relatives clean it with the index finger and thumb of either hand, or with a body cloth. Between the ages of three and five, depending on when the

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things. Love stories are not told to children under 13. The adults themselves are not really interested in stories, only in folksongs. Adults also sing to their children, and encourage them to learn special children's songs from an early age; but they do also pick up adult folksongs simply by listening to them.

5.18. Child upbringing does not appear to be particularly repressive. The relative freedom that smaller children enjoy, is summed up in a proverb: "Children [left out on] the right-of-way will grow; children [kept in] the room get rotten." Children are disciplined by a variety of threats. They are told they will be given away, if bad, to a Golla mendicant or a Kurumba tribesman. The coming of a ghost, demon, or a vaccinator is another common threat; or they may be told a tiger or a pig will take them away. Otherwise people compare a bad child unfavourably with the behaviour of his childhood friend. These threats and comparisons have little effect on older children. From the age of five or six children are jokingly told about a certain cross-cousin who will come to marry them "next year." This threat or promise is also used to enjoin proper behaviour: "If your wife saw you, she'd abuse you" (or conversely, "she'd marry you at once"). When there seems to be a choice among several cousins the parents may ask a child which he prefers, or threaten to bring a bad one to him if he misbehaves. The same treatment is used to discipline girls, with the additional possibility of telling a small girl she will be given away in marriage to a beggar, a Kota or a Kurumba, instead of to a Badaga husband. Adolescent children may not be disciplined so gently, and some of them are not unfamiliar with a rope's end.

Kindness and outright bribery are also lavished on children, as evidenced in the saying: "It is like influencing children by giving them crude sugar."

5.19. Between the ages of five and seven children go through a transition marked by some major changes in their daily habits. In the old days some girls would become child-brides after reaching the age of five. Nowadays the transition means spending much of the week in school instead of at home. There are other changes too. The children begin to eat from their own plates. Girls stop sleeping with their fathers, though they may continue to sleep with their mothers or with other children. Boys are now embarrassed to sleep with their mothers or sisters. If there are several boys or several girls of similar age on one street they now band together

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and all sleep in a vacant house, or one where only a widow lives, or one with a newborn baby (and hence no possibility of adult sexual activity at night). If a group is sleeping in such a house children of the opposite sex are not allowed in it.

5.20. In the last century children might only wash once a month, and be really dirty the rest of the time. Now they are washed every evening, and after reaching five years they do this for themselves. In the morning they only wash the face and clean the teeth with charcoal and a twig. Until about 1930 girls below five wore no undergarments but were simply wrapped in a loincloth. Even above that age boys and girls from very poor families continued to dress like that. Now both boys and girls wear vests and underpants from an early age. I will not offer further details on their dress here, as a full account may be found in Hockings (1979 b). By the age of seven or eight children knew how to wash their clothes; but since about 1930 and the requirements of schooling they have usually given their dirty clothes to an obliging sister or mother.

5.21. In summary, we can see that children become enculturated partly by the tales their elders entertain them with, and partly by moving freely around the village, doing things together like working and playing and sleeping. As in all parts of India, small children look to their elder siblings for guidance and leadership. As one proverb expresses this, "If the firstborn is not up to the ears, how can the later-born reach to the horns?" Outdoor group games are popular with the very young, and will be supervised by some old man or woman. In later childhood team sports such as football and a near-lethal form of field hockey are played between village teams. There are also hopscotch games, board games and string figures to while away the time or sharpen the wits of children at various ages. As we will now outline, there is also a series of childhood ceremonies which educate a young person in the values and the structure of his society, and in some cases affect his appearance and attitudes.

Childhood Ceremonies

5.22. This is not the place to offer a detailed ethnographic account of the various life-cycle ceremonies that are performed: they have already been described elsewhere by Natesa Sastri (1892) and

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(*gore huṇṇu*) To cure it they are washed clean with hot water and anointed with butter, or nowadays coconut oil, before the patient goes to bed. 757

ALOPECIA (*bo:le maṇḍe*) 6.9. A treatment for baldness is to rub deer's blood into the scalp. (755)

DERMATITIS VENENATA (*bava:ci turi*) 6.10. When women are gathering firewood they are careful to avoid contact with a creeper called *bava:ci*, which grows in the shade of the forest. If it is broken and its juice touches the skin, itches develop all over the body. The treatment is to touch the itching parts with *go:re* (the name of many species; cf. trilingual index), a plant that grows in damp places. After about a week the itching stops. (764)

ECZEMA (*hu:huṇṇu*) 6.11. Eczema is reportedly treated by grinding up the leaves of dead-nettle and applying the mixture with lime juice to the affected areas (Krishnamurthi 1953: 145). If there is prolonged itching on one part of the body, the skin is trimmed off and then medicine for a laceration is applied.

Lacerations

LACERATIONS (*gaiya*) 6.12. Something intolerable is referred to by the proverb, "It's like filling a wound in the stomach with salt." Another proverb emphasizes the need to take great care of lacerations: "Isn't the wound like an eye?" In general one should not interfere with a wound once it has been treated. First-aid for a cut, if there is no opportunity to get the necessary plants, is to burn an old rag and put the ashes on the wound. 752 (539)

6.13. A cut is not washed before treatment, even if it is on a dirty foot. It may indeed be tied up temporarily with a dirty cloth. Medicines to put on lacerations have changed over the years. Before the British reached the District in 1819 it was customary to use pink marsh balsam or red liberty cap plants. Later, when the geranium had been introduced into the Hills, its younger leaves were used instead. These are ground with salt and two or 752 278

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three peppercorns into paste which is bandaged onto the cut. It is said to stop a swelling and infection. For some sixty years past a third species has been used; it is the hemp agrimony, and it supposedly works quicker. Leaves of any of these four species are nowadays ground up with a pinch of salt and applied thus to the wound. A bandage is then tied over it.

BRUISE (*kandalu*)

6.14. Badagas have no cure for blisters. If these develop on the hand a person continues to work, since his hand must toughen if he is to continue at it anyway. Similarly, no treatment is given for bruises.

THERMAL BURNS: DRY (*benda huṇṇu*)

6.15. For a burn, the therapist grinds up leaves of *kudure ko:ku* (the name of several pennywort species), then mixes them with slime from some stagnant water, and after applying this to the wound ties a clean cloth over it.

There is a proverb referring to saliva, oil or any similar first-aid that might cool the sensation of the burning: "He won't [even] put saliva on a burnt hand." It refers to someone too selfish to help another even to this minimal extent.

One type of burn is not treated at all. If a man returns to the Badaga community from jail, or from having been a Christian convert, he goes through a purification which includes burning the tip of the tongue with a piece of glowing charcoal or gold wire. He must simply allow the wound to heal.

6.16. Another treatment is to take one of the larger leaves of the castor-oil plant, heat it, and put it mixed with gingelly oil onto a wound.

THERMAL BURNS : WET (*benda huṇṇu*)

6.17. For a scald the therapist grinds some prince's feather leaves and mixes them with twice that amount of some slime from stagnant water. The mixture is then applied to the scald.

Animal Bites

6.18. As every child knows, many Nilgiri animals bite. The commonest, as well as the smallest of

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these, is the flea, "which is very numerous in the early part of the monsoon. They are put to flight by [drinking] an infusion of a plant called by the natives Wassumboo [*vasambu*], (*Acorus calamus*), which is indigenous in the Hills." (Baikie 1857: 110)

6.19. Badagas recognize several types of lice and tick. "All live on the dirt of the body or clothes and are spontaneously generated from it," I was told. It is therefore a shameful matter to have these parasites, when, as one proverb puts it, "Small insects are browsing on the head of an uncaring man." To prevent lice, people wash themselves daily and also shave off pubic hair (cf. 2.13). Epidemics of relapsing fever have spread from time to time through the community with the help of body lice (Madras 1928: 63).

6.20. It is recognized that if the bites of larger animals are not cared for properly they may prove fatal, as one proverb warns: "The person scratched by a porcupine cannot return to the] village; a person scratched by a hyena cannot [return to the] yard." Also in the same vein is this one: "The man who is torn by the ibex is not for the house-yard; the man who is torn by the pig is not for the village"; in short, he is finished. The rarest biting animal, now nearly extinct in the Nilgiris, is the tiger. Only tigers that are wounded in the face or suffer from other ailments that prevent them from hunting effectively will become man-eaters (Anderson 1967: *passim*). There have been few recent cases of tigers mauling Badagas, and there is no specific treatment for such wounds beyond the above-mentioned cures for lacerations. Such treatment is also attempted when Badagas are gored by cattle, primarily buffaloes.

6.21. In a case of dog-bite a small amount of lime is put on the wound, and a small copper coin tied on top of this. The patient should not bathe for three days; on the fourth day the bandage can be removed and the wound is cured.

None but a mad jackal would bite a man. Villagers

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would then try to kill it: if they succeed the patient will recover quickly, but if they fail he will become mad too. The actual treatment is the same as for dog-bite.

6.22. It is unlikely that any Badagas have been killed by snake-bite, and the large python (*Python molurus*) is quite rare. A proverb has it that "A cobra won't kill without finding a mistake." This means that if one kicks a cobra (*Naja naja*) unintentionally it will not harm the man because he intended no harm to it. Badagas believe that snakes on the plateau are not as poisonous as those in the plains; they neither kill them nor go near a dead one (Breeks 1873: 104). If bitten by a snake one should immediately tie a tourniquet of some woman's hair, or failing that a thin creeper, around the affected limb or extremity above the swelling. This will help cure it quicker. (The same treatment is used by the Todas; Rivers 1906: 267.)

Sometimes a *mantravaḍi* (magician) cures snake-bite by touching a special small black stone against the wound, and then tying it there while he says some spells. Although he goes through this magical process only once it will cure the wound. After the stone has been tied to the patient he must not sleep for 24 hours, and must starve totally for the same period. Following a snake-bite water must under no circumstances touch any part of the body, and of course the patient must not walk through a stream or be in the rain.

6.23. If one pulls a bee sting out at once the swelling is small; otherwise its poison goes into the swelling. In a case of multiple stings the person must immediately pour water over the body or jump into a nearby stream. In a bad case the patient will be lethargic and have fever for up to three days; and during that time he must bathe very often in cold water. After each bath any

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of the vegetables he has frequently eaten. However Badagas are not in full agreement as to whether this works. Another treatment for the illness involves a therapist. She feels around the forehead on the side where the pain occurs until she can take hold of a "nerve" (sic!) just above the eye. This is then neatly incised with a razor. Despite the bleeding that follows, in most cases, the patient is cured. Sufferers nowadays tend to go to a hospital for treatment, however.

HEADACHE (*maṇḍe:ru*)

Until early in this century therapists cured headaches by making patients swallow a paste they made from common vetch; now they use such pills as aspirin instead.

Ears

DEAFNESS (*kivuḍu*) [732]

6.27. There is no cure for deafness, and so a child deaf from birth will be treated as though dumb. People with wax in the ear may become deaf because they break the drum while trying to clean it. A proverb which relates this fact to the use of another stick as a toothbrush warns, "The teeth are spoiled by not using a stick; the ears are spoiled by using a stick." Nevertheless, the ears are sometimes cleaned out with little sticks, perhaps with a fragment of cloth wrapped around the end: *hasini* is a species often used, and nowadays metal scrapers are too.

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6.28. Earache will pass away, but can also be cured by irrigation. To do this, someone takes a small red chili, cuts off one end and removes the seeds. Using it as a cup, a small amount of any kind of oil is poured into the chili. It is held near the hearth or a flame until it is warm. Then the patient lies on his side and one or two drops of the warm oil are poured into the ear. This usually cures the ache; but if not, and if there is wax inside, the ear must be washed out with hot water.

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not dry himself, but instead sits covered with a cotton cloth under which some incense is burnt to create a thick smoke. After this a cure can be expected. During the entire course of the illness the patient must eat only the "cooling" foods such as milk and fruits, and must abstain from things like chili. Also he should use no woollen material for clothing or bedding.

Mouth, Nose and Throat

DENTISTRY 752
(304)
(539)
(856)

6.38. Teeth are not filed in any way nor are cavities filled. If a tooth is loose, it is pulled out with the fingers, or else an attempt is made to cure it by rubbing it with ginger. There is a proverb which warns, "The son who is spurning his father is no good; the tooth that is protruding from the lips is no good." As we have seen (5.27), a woman will try to bend a child's misshapen tooth into position with a cloth.

PYORRHOEA (*ma:dua*) 164
(753)
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6.39. The major mouth disease is quickly detected because a very strong odour is noticeable even from some feet away. Although mainly a children's disease, it can affect adults. Badagas believe that "germs" eat the teeth: the disease can rot them, and a sufferer cannot put anything in his mouth because it is so painful. The mouth therefore has to be made insensitive so that he can eat. A local anaesthetic is therefore made from galls found on oak, obtained from a tree in the plains: they are over 2 cms in diameter and are ground up with woman's milk or cow's milk to form a paste, which is then rubbed all over the mouth cavity.

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The medicine for *ma:dua* is made from two fruits that can now be bought in shops. One is the unripe *anila kae* and the other nutmeg; they are ground together in equal amounts and mixed with woman's milk or cow's milk or else water. This solution is taken early in the morning, before breakfast, and again before the evening meal. If

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164 754 6.53. Badagas sometimes attribute stomach pains to sorcery. Witness a nineteenth century account:

> . . .he complained. . .that there was a hardness in his stomach, as if there was a piece of wood in it. . .A few days after, however, I was ... informed that the man had died, and was asked to attend the funeral. On my reaching the spot, the father of the deceased begged me earnestly to open and examine the body. . ., because he and all his relations were convinced that one of the sacrificing Kurumbas had been bribed . . . to destroy the lad's life by magic. I declined to interfere, defend the poor Kurumba. . . On my repairing to the place again next morning. . .I was met by all the people, who told me that. . . on examining the ashes of the burnt corpse in their presence, the sacrificing Kurumba himself had taken from the stomach, two legs of a fowl and a piece of cactus, reduced to charcoal, and also some raw grain half consumed by the flames; which fully accounted for the violent pain in that region. . .(Metz 1864 : 121-22).

752 (539) 6.54. A proverb asks rhetorically, "If a man has eaten poison and is dying, will he survive if given milk ?" Badagas believe that milk is not an antidote for poison, and that the only cure is to make the man vomit. This is simply achieved by forcing him to swallow cowdung mixed with onion or garlic, or alternatively a mixture of dog dung and garlic.

POISONING (*maddu timbadu*)

164 757 6.55. Constipation occurs because the body is "over-heated"; it is commonly a result of eating a large plantain or the olive linden fruit. One earlier treatment called for an opium poppy head ; but because of the difficulty of getting it the medicine is no longer prepared. In that treatment a poppy head was soaked in a pot of water over-

CONSTIPATION (*sege*)

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and Irula women had *belle*, whereas today only a tiny minority of them do.

People with either of these diseases are generally weak and unhealthy. *Su:le* can be recognized by the watery sores, but *belle* cannot be seen because it is "inside the body" of men. A therapist can tell from a person's face whether he has either disease. The remedy is to eat opium, as often as three times daily. In earlier days Badaga youths were encouraged to have relations with a variety of women so that they would catch *su:le* early in life; for if it first attacked them when much older and weaker it could kill them. Since they deliberately tried to spread the disease in this manner, it tended to be more widespread among the Badagas than among other tribal groups.

Nowadays it is a great disgrace if a person is known to have a venereal disease and he is shunned socially. The seriousness with which it is treated is adumbrated in the proverb, "A debt is like a woman's disease (*su:le*)." In general the disease is still brought into the community by men who have had relations with non-Badaga women, such as urban prostitutes. If a man knows that he is infected he avoids infecting his wife.

It is said that a particularly virulent form of the disease can only be cured by intercourse with a donkey. If the donkey dies immediately afterwards, the man is presumed cured. In one village where I stayed a man borrowed the washerman's donkey, but was dismayed to find that it did not die.

STERILITY

6.62. Aside from venereal disease, the only other serious reproductive problem for Badaga is infertility, as we have seen (3.17). To understand this, it must be stated that they do not traditionally connect conception with the fertilization of an ovum, but see it as an effect of satisfaction in the minds of the couple. Badagas do believe men can be sterile, but so rarely that only one man would

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one bed, on which there lies a walking-stick for each dead adult, or a smaller stick for a child. In such a funeral the ritual acts and prayers are performed for each male first, and then for each female, in order of generation seniority and not of absolute age at death. If people of different phratries have died in the same hamlet then a separate bed is used for the sticks representing the members of each. Rituals are done for the superior phratry first, unless the dead members of that phratry were visitors from another hamlet. Finally, if some visitors have died there will be two separate beds for the funerals of agnates and affines within the same phratry.

164 RUBELLA
[165] (*kasare*)

7.4. *Kasare*, probably identifiable with measles, kills scarcely one in a hundred of those who do not follow the restrictions, whereas smallpox kills one in two of those who ignore the treatment procedure. Nonetheless measles should not be taken lightly: as one ironic proverb puts the matter, "Measles does not harm one; the eye is ungrateful [for what it sees]." All the rules for treating smallpox should be followed, except that an infected hamlet is not deserted. The water-sprinkling treatment, begun on the third day after the disease has been recognized by its widely scattered spots, has usually cured it by the seventh day. This is followed by the customary hot bath and inhalation of smoke (7. 2).

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[731]

164 PLAGUE
(*ili sattara*)

7.5. Plague was not uncommon early in this century, and was known to be brought by rats (*Rattus rattus*). It is not much of a problem now however, as a medical missionary has observed:

> [Ketti] village has been harbouring the infection of plague for the last 18 months. But although there were as many as 138 rat falls reported in one week, we only know of four humans attacked. This clearly demonstrates the value of prompt preventative measures [by Government health authorities]. Owing to this incidence of plague fewer people have been coming into Ketti from

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have done an excess of good deeds over bad it is destined for heaven, whereas if there is an excess of bad deeds over good it is consigned to hell. "If you live a good life you can wait and see the human world; when you die you can wait and see the heavenly world." Badagas do not believe in the further reincarnation of souls, for each soul suffers seven births, but only the seventh incarnation is in human form, the previous ones having been as animals. God assigns a soul to each person at birth, and writes on his brow the exact number of years he or she will live. Even God can sometimes be wrong, however, because an attack by a wild animal, a suicide, murder or some other calamity, may deprive the body of life before it was destined to die. In this dilemma the soul is obliged to remain on the face of the earth for the balance of time until the day when God had intended it to depart this life. In the words of another proverb: "While living he has no blessing of God; when dead he is not in heaven." In this way ghosts are to be found on the Nilgiri Hills, hovering just above the ground with their feet pointing backwards and making a frightening sound—sometimes a screech and sometimes a groan.

Ghosts in general continue to have ordinary human needs, which they seek to satisfy. One ghost told listeners during a seance that it had lived for a while in hollow trees, but it found this very uncomfortable. Mostly ghosts want to be inside people so that they will be safe, warm and well fed. When a ghost has been exorcised from somebody, it may therefore possess another person or else live inside an animal if it is not properly trapped. Further expression of the ghost's humanity comes in the seance, when it may ask for unusual foods, liquor, cigarettes or good clothing, as a pre-condition for its leaving the possessed person. Particularly the ghosts of young people, suicides because of their anxieties and frustrations, may ask for the things they could not enjoy while alive, and will demand extra singing and dancing during the seance too.

Some Badagas are possessed by non-Badaga ghosts, in which case a ghost may speak through the victim's mouth in Toda, Malayalam, English or some other language not in fact known to the possessed person! Interpreters are sometimes brought in to help with such an exorcism.

Despite their widespread belief in ghosts, Badagas are initially skeptical of a person's claim to be possessed. They will therefore begin a seance by a questioning period to see if the ghost is "genui-

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9 THE ADVENT OF DEATH

•539

"Even if one lives a thousand years, death won't pass him by."
(Proverb)

Old Age

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9.1. The word *kaṭṭe*, "dried log," is applied to a very old person, who is thought to be dry and unlikely to live long. If close to a hundred he is thought to be good for nothing and probably dim-witted he is then called *koraḍu*, "dead-plant steam." The Badagas have a proverb which asserts: "A man above sixty years is said to have half-sense". Furthermore, "At the time of getting spoiled one has no [use of his] brain; at the time of dying one has no sense." Difficulties that the elderly have in accomplishing anything are also referred to thus: "It is like teaching an old lady to cough like her great-grandchildren." Similarly: "The activity of a twenty year-old is pleasure-loveing; the activity of an eighty year-old is that of old age." While an old person is usually shown outward respect, younger people tend not to heed his advice and opinions too closely. This too is reflected in proverbs: "If a person cannot see, hear or walk, as he is such an old man, you must first ask his permission to do anything." And again, "If the lord speaks the whole village quakes; if an old man speaks there is a sound of babbling." He is indeed expected to be the first to perform a wide range of ritual acts, from touching the earring during a child's ear-piercing ceremony to pouring a handful of grain on a corpse. Some other proverbs also speak dispara-

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gingly of the elderly: "After becoming aged one's greed increases;" more sarcastic ones on the same theme are these: "As greed increases, the lifetime lessens," "As mist catches onto a peak, so her vilest characteristics catch hold of an old woman," and again, "Is it medicine for old age, like advice for a bad time?" This latter one refers to the belief that there is no further need for medicine when a person is old, just as a bad man is beyond need of advice. (The general world for all kinds of medicine, *maddu*, is used in this last proverb; it also means "magical potion," "opium" and "poison," however).

9.2. The general attitude towards adult women is not a charitable one: it is succinctly summed up in the saying, "The man knows the nature of others; his wife is an expert in cooking." In contrast to this, though, the status of women is never higher than in old age, and in a few cases old ladies have been members of the otherwise all-male village councils. The Lingayat Badagas in fact treat a post-menopausal woman as a man; but most Badagas do not, for if orthodox they still prohibit an old woman from eating or drinking in the inner and most sacred parts of the house. No ceremonies mark the occurrence of menopause; but Lingayat women are often given a *Linga* symbol to wear after it has occurred.

9.3. Older people have friends in their own village, but not elsewhere because of the difficulty they have in getting around. They select friends of equal age, and hence similar memories; but whether or not the friends are equally well-to-do seems unimportant. A pair of widows or else a pair of widowers are commonly good friends; and provided they are very old, even a widow and a widower can be close friends, treating each other as fictive brother and sister, without other villagers misinterpreting the relationship. Again, if they are extremely elderly, two men and their two wives may treat each other as *four* brothers. Then there is nothing scandalous about an old man sitting with the wife of his friend and talking to her for hours. In contrast with this, an old man with a young wife will not be particularly friendly with another old man whose wife is elderly.

9.4. It is believed that if a man wears gold his lifetime will lengthen. If on the other hand he sees two crows in the act of sexual congress, he will die within a year. An elderly man receives this information calmly; but a younger man will try to avoid his fate by counteracting the omen. This is done by going to a hill above a neighbouring hamlet, and shouting out to the villagers that he—mentioning himself by name—is dead. As he is careful that no one

4: Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
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761 789 sees who has shouted the news, some of his closer friends and relatives from that hamlet will immediately leave for his house, to pay respect to his corpse. A woman can resort to the same subterfuge only if she can find a man to make the dreadful pronouncement on her behalf. The process of misleading the mourning friends is supposed to prolong a person's life: it may also be done by relatives for an influential man who is indeed sick, but who they hope will be enabled to live longer by this process of cheating death. 763 This concern contrasts with the cynical treatment sometimes offered to dying people in the last century: "When a rich Badaga is very ill and the agony approaches all the relatives come and gather near him and see to it that he is well provided for his journey into the realm of the dead. For this end they make the dying man swallow two small gold pieces with butter... If the ill man does not die very soon and the relatives think he lasts too long they give him [761] opium in order to hasten his hour of death." (Mörike 1849: 102).

763 825 As mentioned above, the sight of two crows in congress is an omen of impending death. Other birds give similar information. If the forest eagle-owl (*Huhua nipalensis*) calls ³gu::₁ there will certainly be a death soon in the hamlet where it was heard: if it is already past the new moon, death will come before the full moon. Thus if anyone is sick in the hamlet closest to where this bird is heard, people know he will die; and if no one is sick, women nearing their delivery take special care. (Other kinds of cries made by the same bird indicate whether or not rain is coming.)

761 539 Nothing is more certain than death. As various Badaga proverbs put it: "If you live to six years you will die; if you live to a hundred years you will die"; "Even though you can escape at any time you cannot escape the time of death;" "You have paid up his padded account after seeing it; there is no sorrow when a man dies in old age"; "Even if all the [Nilgiri] divisions leave you, the burial ground won't leave you alone"; and again, "Even if one lives a thousand years, death won't pass him by."

763 9.5. When an old person becomes sick and seems likely to die, he is given a separate bed even if he did not previously have one, and is treated with circumspection. Messages about his true condi- 763 tion are sent to a number of other Badaga hamlets where the dying 574 man has relatives, inviting those people to visit him. Unless the dying person is more than 40 such visitors are not invited, because [203] a much greater chance of recovery is presumed, while a large party

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10 THE THERAPISTS AND THEIR KNOWLEDGE

539

"If your lifetime is worth six [of something], taking care of [others'] life is a hundred times more valuable."

(Proverb)

The Practice of Therapy

121 10.1. In the Western world today (exclusive of the U.S.A.) the professionals who work in health-related disciplin—esthe doctors, nurses, dentists, opticians, dieticians and others—claim a relatively small segment of most people's attention until a specific physical need arises. Then they go for a consultation, get some treatment, pay the bill and hope to feel better. The specialization and profesionalism of modern medicine find their reflection in the confidence with which most members of the Western public view medical judgements.

It is easy to make subjective equations between Western specialists and their Badaga counterparts. We might equate therapist and doctor, shaman and psychiatrist, exorcist and confessor, midwife and gynaecologist; but we can hardly expect that therapist equals veterinarian too. Indeed, rather than make such facile equations we need to look at the social contexts in which the Badaga specialists work.

10.2. There are certain aspects of the individual's cultural and biological environment which a Badaga feels powerless to change or control. While some of these aspects are understandably beyond

4: Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

rational manipulation—imponderable factors like the will of God, for example—others are as close to the individual as the diseases that afflict his own body. It seems that all Badagas recognize six kinds of specialists as mediators between the individual and his cultural and biological environment. (Their importance is incidentally expressed in a proverb: "You should not stay in a village without a mediator [even till] noon.")

The first of these categories is the paramount chief (*na:ku betta gauda*) of all the Badagas, a man whose powers are now greatly diminished, but who in earlier times was ultimately responsible for mediating between the community and the outside world. This meant that he was obliged to intercede with and pay revenue to the Muslim overlords in the eighteenth century and the East India Company in the early nineteenth century. Since then he has continued to mediate between the Badagas and the Toda, Kota and Kurumba tribes on issues that concern the entire community.

Secondly, each hamlet headman (*gauda*), aided by a small council of elders, is responsible for mediating between the individual and the traditional laws and customs of the community. He is thus responsible for conformity and punishment in his hamlet.

Thirdly, the priest in each village, as everywhere else in India, is responsible for mediating between man and the gods. His ability to gain their attention and win their support is crucial for the fertility of crops and cattle, and hence for the well-being of the village community.

These three types of mediators are not primarily concerned with issues of health, except incidentally when a village has to be vacated during an epidemic. But the other three mediators are all health specialists. The midwife is concerned with the yet unborn. The therapist deals with problems of the living body (human or animal). The exorcist mediates between the community and the ghosts of the dead. Each is thus relied upon for mediation in a well-defined sphere, as Diagram 5 illustrates.

This "sphere of mediation" that separates the individual Badaga from the problems of everyday life differs in its economic dimension from comparable mediation in the Western world. We normally pay our doctor or dentist for his professional services when we feel we need them; the Badaga normally does *not* pay directly for any of these six types of mediator, and indeed it is by no means always the suffering individual who makes the decision to

41 Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
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task, and does not put it on again till she has bathed herself at the end of the pollution period.

Today each cluster of villages (i.e. Panchayat Board) has one trained nurse and two or three midwives appointed by the State Government. The later are just experienced Badaga midwives with no formal training who happen to have been recommended for the position. 759 744

Exorcists and Shamans

10.7. Badaga exorcists are always male, and are very few in number. As often as not Badagas' ghosts have to be exorcized by non-Badaga exorcists. These men may also have lesser therapeutic skills, such as making talismans to ward off fevers and evil influences from the children who wear them. The idiosyncratic nature of exorcism is sufficiently indicated by the examples in Chapter 8 and calls for no further elaboration here. 791 (462) (751)

The most feared *mantrava:dis* (shamans) in the Nilgiris were members of the Kurumba tribe, one of whom might be "called in on all occasions of blight and murrain to propitiate or scare the demon of disease"—if such there be (Breeks 1873: 53). Though this may still occasionally happen, I find no record of Kurumbas acting as exorcists to the Badagas, even though they did offer much supernatural protection to them from the sorcery of other malicious Kurumbas ; and they do sometimes try to cure the sick. Thus, "In 1891, the inmates of a single Kurumba but were said to have been murdered, and the hut burnt to ashes, because one of the family had been treating a sick Badaga child, and failed to cure it.... Again, in 1900, a whole family of Kurumbas were murdered, of which the head, who had a reputation as a medicine man, was believed to have brought disease and death into a Badaga village." (Thurston 1912: 233-34 ; also 1909 : 86). The Badagas were never so brutal with their own therapists, but the latter never seemed to be holding the threat of sorcery over the heads of their fellows. The worst that an unpopular therapist might have to suffer would be the mockery of an appropriate proverb; for instance, "He has healed others, but cannot cure himself" (Metz 1864 :95), or "It is half bad if you do something [wrong] when you know about it; entirely bad if you do it when you are ignorant." 756 179 (791) (754) 759 (754) (626) (539)

4: Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

It is true that different Badaga therapists may give varying diagnoses of a complaint, and the recommended treatment will vary accordingly. A patient should follow the advice of the superior and most influential among the therapists he consults. A general Badaga attitude towards "experts" is expressed in a proverb: "It is half bad if you do something you know about, entirely bad if you do it when you are ignorant." The point is that a knowledgeable person will at least know what risks he is taking: mistakes are tolerated, blunders are not, as one informant put it. An incompetent therapist or midwife may be cut down to size with another proverb: "By claiming to have qualifications he became king; by spoiling it he became a poor man."

10.15. In ancient Sanskrit texts (Charaka Samhita I, etc.) it is stated that there are three aspects to man: behaviour, mind, and health (*pittam*). Although Badaga therapists have not been able to read such texts, they do believe there are three arteries in the wrist, one controlling each of these factors. These arteries pulsate, and one can tell whether they are "good" or not. In one small village of about three hundred people where I worked there were four men who had this diagnostic skill, but none of them ever practised as a therapist. I was told that such Badagas can check the pulse, on the right wrist of a male and the left of a female, to determine which aspect of the body is upset. Its associated artery will be pulsing irregularly. Athough being a diagnostician seems to be viewed as an informal and unimportant role by Badagas, it is clear that these men actually play a crucial part in deciding whether or not a person needs some therapeutic treatment; and to this extent there is a male surveillance over the (mainly female) therapists and their work. In the village just mentioned, for instance, it is worth noting that one of the four diagnosticians was the son of the only therapist there *and* was also the traditional (though inactive) headman. The other three men commanded a certain amount of respect too because of their social positions.

10.16. Dreams are not considered to cause illness, but they are certainly diagnostic of problems to come and are treated as omens by the Badagas. So if one dreams about snakes, it means there is something impure and thus threatening in the house. If one dreams of eating honey, he will get cold and become ill. If a woman dreams of eating fruit, especially oranges, she will become pregnant before the next menses. If she dreams of losing her nose-

41 Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

753 [824] [831]

illness. Sexual over-exertion can similarly make a young man incapacitated (cf. 3.10).

(*h*) The odour that follows on an act of coitus, or the "bad wind" that emanates from a corpse, or from a childbirth, are widely held to be responsible for illness and even death in unweaned infants.

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(*i*) Some misfortunes, like bites, stings and burns, are caused by quite obvious external agents. What we would consider equally obvious cases of infection, however, may be considered by Badagas to have a more complicated causation ; as in the reported case of a woman with

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> an extensive ulceration from the right arm pit to the right shoulder and to the right breast. It was full of black-headed maggots .... It seems she had been in this state for one and a half months in the village ... The rest of the crowd made most unkind remarks at her expense. Some said that it was on account of her bad life in a previous birth that she had to suffer thus. Her husband's brother said that I must either cure her soon or put her to a painless end .... I sprinkled into the deep ulcerated tissue a small quantity of chloro form, and the maggots fell dead in hundreds .... There followed an uneventful recovery ... (Ketti Medical Mission 1949: 4-5)

(The writer was of course an Indian doctor trained in scientific medicine.)

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(*j*) Depigmentation of the skin is caused by the supposed "bite of a blindworm."

[797]

(*k*) Nowadays a "germ theory" is not unknown, as for example in the explanation offered me for why teeth rot. Cleanliness of body is strongly approved of today.

[797]

(*l*) In the case of plague it is thought that mosquitoes carry the disease from rats to men. This modern-sounding but inaccurate theory probably arose from the publicity that surrounded the mosquito eradication programme on the lower slopes some year ago.

[797] [539]

(*m*) And finally there is a belief that bad luck and illness tend to repeat themselves for an individual: as a proverb puts it, "The very foot which is scarred will be hurt again."

7i Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1987
AW50 Badaga AW50

· 37 · *The Man Named Unige Mada (Nilgiri Hills, Tamilnadu)*

539 This next tale preserves some of the oral storytelling style of a folk bard and thus has a special grammatical flavor worthy of note. It comes from the Nilgiri Hills and was told by a Badaga.
648 These people represent one of several important communities who have long resided in this anthropologically well-known district of Tamilnadu. These, plus a few other groups, together form a relatively isolated caste-like system. However, this whole population is so small and distinctive that it is generally called tribal. The Todu group stands at the top of this hierarchy and are the priests and buffalo keepers. Next come the Badaga who are farmers, and under them are the Kurumba who are sorcerers, and then the Kota, who are known as artisans and musicians.

539 The following story depicts a Kurumba who came to a Badaga in a time of need, and eventually became his dependent. In this sense it serves as a kind of origin tale for traditional Badaga-Kurumba social relations. It also portrays the Badaga as (231) keepers of fine buffalo herds. Buffalo ownership is often linked to the status claims of the Todas, even though many Badaga own such animals too. In this sense the present tale also asserts the wealth of the Badaga community vis-à-vis the ritual importance of buffalo for the Todas. However, since no reference is made to the highly important Kota group, it is clear that the tale of Unige Mada stops short of providing a general charter for (533) Nilgiri society. This Badaga tale would normally be told in the form of a narrative song. It would be sung before a group of Badagas during a lull in some ritual event.

On quite another level, this tale is also interesting for what it says about hospitality. The Badaga invites an exhausted Kurumba into his house and nurses him lovingly back to health. For this act of generosity his family can expect to enjoy much future prosperity. Such actions help counteract diaster and starvation, not only in an immediate sense, but also in the long run. The images of prosperity used are especially important. The teller speaks of many children under the Badaga's arm, grandchildren on his lap and great grandchildren under his widespread shawl. A similar formulaic phrase, used by bards on the plains just

7: Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1987
AW50 Badaga AW50

• 539 below these hills, likens the family of a man blessed by the gods to a great, spreading clump of bamboo. Hospitality, furthermore, is an expression of brotherhood. This Badaga treats his needy guest as he should a true brother. That is why this tale has been placed alongside several others in this collection that depict support between actual brothers.

THERE ONCE WAS a man called Unige Mada who lived in a place called Bani.[1] He had eight sons. Here is his story. At one time Bani became very dry[2] and there was no rain at all. Mada first dug up some earth near a plantain tree and found it was very dry. He then dug up earth near a toddy palm and found it, too, was dry. Mada could find no food to eat and no water to drink. What could he do? He had eight sons. But with no rain, what could such a man do? After a time all of Mada's sons died. He wife died too. Now Mada wondered and wondered what to do. He no longer had clothes to wear. He was forced to pick fern leaves. He tied these around his head to serve in place of a cloth turban. He also took a jungle creeper and wound it around his waist as a lower cloth.

Finally, Mada thought of a friend who lived in a nearby place called Malladu. So Mada made some vessels out of bamboo and tied three on each end of a bamboo rod. He placed the rod on his shoulder and set off for Malladu. Mada set off from Bani. He traveled and traveled. Along the way Mada dug up some tubers. He also searched for fern roots. Mada further collected wild honey from the biggest bees' nests. But soon Mada barely had the strength to drag himself along. He did not have enough for his stomach. What was Mada, the man from Bani, to do? He worried and worried. Finally Mada approached a place called Kinil Hada, near the settlement of Kinnakore. Mada was unable to walk any further. His right leg refused to move and his left leg would not step forward. This was the state that Mada found himself in. What could the man from Bani do? Mada soon fell down exhausted. He had lost all his energy. Then Mada found a jagged jujube bush[3] and rested his feet on its stump. He placed his head on a senna plant. Mada collapsed in the place called Kinilhada, not far from Kinnakore.

In Kinnakore lived a man called Jogi who also had eight sons

7: Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1987
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•539 and many grandchildren. He had grandchildren in his lap, children under his arms, and great grandchildren under the ends of his shawl. Jogi was sitting on the council podium in Kinnakore. Soon he noticed that the buffaloes that should have been grazing on the village green had all gathered together in a tight circle. He saw this and was worried. So Jogi looked towards his home and called out to his wife, "Are you in the house? There may be some danger to you or to me or to our property. All the buffalo, all the cattle, have formed a tight circle. There may be a tiger[4] close at hand! Oh little wife, please come and get these many sons, daughters, grandsons, and granddaughters." His wife Kade appeared and asked, "Oh husband! Are you not the little Jogi, a father of eight sons?" But Jogi was already hurrying to get all of the young children inside. Then Jogi went and grabbed his well-kept gun from a top shelf. As he came out of the house he could see the buffaloes still gathered together. He went closer and counted them. He could see that not a single buffalo had been lost. So he drove all these animals toward the village.

Then Jogi saw the man called Mada, fallen and almost unconscious at the side of the road. He could see his legs on a stump of a jagged jujube bush and his head resting on a senna plant. "Oh what a shameful thing I see," said Jogi. "Perhaps this exhaustion is due to starvation. Perhaps this man has had no food and no water." And so Jogi lifted Mada into his arms and carried him into his own house. He then called out to his wife, "Oh wife, you will get holy blessings if you can help this man! He is exhausted six times over for want of food and three times more for lack of water. Please give him some curds." So the wife of Jogi, father of eight sons, took some curds from the milk pot. She gave these to her husband and he poured them with a spoon into Mada's mouth. Thus he slowly wetted the man's throat. Then little by little Jogi poured in more curds. He began to think about how much merit would descend on his many children. The man named Jogi, father of eight sons, continued to pour curds gently down Mada's throat. Finally, all the curds had reached Mada's stomach. Then Mada opened his eyes and took in his surroundings. He spoke saying, "O Sir, father of eight sons! O man named Jogi! Merit from heaven will descend on you and your many children. I suffered six times over for lack of food, and three

7: Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1987
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times more for lack of water. When you poured curds into my mouth my eyes opened again. You will surely be blessed. Now, please, it would be good of you to give me some food." Upon hearing this Jogi replied, "Wife! Your children will receive holy blessings. Please give this man some food." And so Jogi fed Mada day after day.

The stranger took these meals and time began to pass. Then one day Mada spoke up saying, "Man called Jogi! Little Jogi of Kinnakore! My sons, too, were eight in number. But Bani was dry. There was not even a drop of rain. And so in the end there was no food to eat and no water to drink. I dug up bulbs and I searched for fern roots. I collected honey from wild bee nests. Indeed, I tried and I tried. But there was never enough food for me and my family. So all my eight sons and even my wife Hirige Madi passed away. After that I thought of leaving Bani to look for some permanent source of support. I thougnt of begging. I started out with empty milk containers made of bamboo. I thought of going to some friends in Malladu, to the place inhabited by Toda dairymen. I thought that if I gave them these milk vessels they might give me some coins in return.[5]

I came all this way with such thoughts in my mind. But when I reached the village green at Kinnakore, O my master, I was unable to walk further. I had no strength below the waist. I could not even crawl. I was exhausted for want of food. I collapsed and my feet lay on the stump of the jagged jujube bush and my head on the senna plant. That is how I fell down. Then you found me and gave me food. You thought of the divine blessings that would fall upon you and your children. You gave me some of your own curd from the milk pot and after that curd reached my stomach my eyes opened once more. Now I have had many meals and strength has returned. Let me serve you henceforth by looking after your buffaloes."

This then was the way Jogi came to support Mada. He found this way to give him food and clothing and keep him there in the village. What would the man called Jogi, the father of eight sons, do next? Now Jogi turned and addressed the stranger saying, "O Kurumba, as long as you live you may tend my buffaloes." In this way Mada was properly cared for. He began looking after Jogi's buffalo, and soon he began to thrive. Soon the

7: Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1987
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539 man named Jogi began to sing. He had his children in his arms and his grandchildren on his lap. He sang a happy song and felt contented. Things were going well. Such is the story that is told.

· 38 · *Mamo Jalwalo (Gujarat)*

This story from the Saurastra area of Gujarat is about a local male deity who takes the disguise of a youthful, handsome farmhand. He appears at a moment when a local couple is unable to cope with the work of cultivating a distant field. Acting like a faithful young brother, the stranger helps these peasants to the point where they become dependent on him. Later he reveals his true identity as a god and retires to live in a large tree. The couple then bows down before him in worship. This behavior provides a kind of male equivalent for the goddess Manasa, who similarly appears first as a fish and then as a snake in tale 22. In both cases a local deity enters the family circle and is treated as a junior relative. Soon this growing dependency relationship is reversed, however, and the true divinity and parentlike status of the peculiar character is revealed. In this respect the present story parallels those of many other local deities where a god first presents himself in something small and unthreatening but later unveils larger powers. These developments suggestively parallel that of a true child, who eventually takes over the family from aging parents, who in turn, become dependent on their juniors. In many such stories an important link is provided to some striking aspect of the local landscape, such as a rock crevasse or a stony hillock. In this tale, the neighborhood landmark is a large and lonely tree. The god's magical lock of hair furthermore matches other Indian folktales where a key character is controlled through the concealment of some part of his body in a distant container. In this case the hair tuft reminds one of a common Hindu ritual custom. A lock of hair growing from the top of the head is often said to be the means by which the dead are lifted to heaven.

Mamo Jalwalo's association with rain and with crop fertility

8: Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1982 AN50 Badaga AN50

(amongst others) either his FZD or his MBD, but there is a marked preference for a FZD and some good reasons for it.[2] One involves a feeling of status congruence. Men, it is believed, demean themselves somewhat by becoming bride-givers. This is acknowledged nowadays by the payment of dowry, a new custom among the Badagas. But a young man's spiritual guide is not the family priest in this community; instead it is always his MB, whom he calls *guru* and also accords much respect. It is thus incongruent if that particular man should give his daughter in marriage to the very boy he has counselled. Marriage with a FZD, or with the daughter of a MB other than one's *guru*, gets around this emotional problem.

Patrilocality is another preference that is usually spoken of as an unbending rule. Yet there is in point of fact a term, *aḷiya se:tu*, for the live-in son-in-law, a young man who opts to live with his wife's family after their marriage. This is considered an undignified and pitiful thing to do, but it can bring real material advantages to a man whose wife has no brothers, and is a necessary alternative to virilocal residence in such a family. The epic ballad *Ba:la Sevana* deals with a man who moves into his father-in-law's village to help with the buffaloes, leaving his own mother in her village lamenting the loss of her only son, and bemoaning her fate since "there will be nobody to set fire to her corpse." It is interesting to note that Ba:la Sevana married into the Kunda region, one that used to be so economically distressed that its children were often sold into bondage for a period of years, thereby becoming the household servants of Badagas in other parts of the Nilgiris. The live-in son-in-law was one institution that helped make up for the loss of male children in those bad years, when bondage was the only answer to the threat of starvation in that region.

2. Patriliny and Patrilocality

Today the Badagas are successful cash-crop farmers specialising in cabbages, potatoes, and tea; those of the Kunda region are the wealthiest in the District. Until the early part of this century, on the other hand, they were all mainly farmers of millet. This and several other grains, together with dairy produce, provided their subsistence. When one delves further back in their history, to the 17th and 18th centuries when they were already well established on the Nilgiri Hills but with a population of under 2,000, one finds that the Badagas were already millet farmers yet thought of themselves as primarily buffalo herdsmen. This is reflected very clearly in a number of their epic ballads dating from that time. Since each family or lineage used once to have its own herd of buffaloes, then it is legitimate for us to consider

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[2] Letters placed in single apostrophes, 'A', 'B', 'C', etc.; stand for hypothetical people and are like personal names. Letters placed in double quotation marks, e.g. "M," "F," etc., indicate classificatory rather than actual kin relationships, and should be read as "in the category of mothers," and so on. Z = sister, S = son, etc.

8: Hockings E-S (1962-1977) 1982 AW50 Badaga AW50

121 the kinship system in the Badaga case as having developed as a means of assigning and transferring ownership of and rights in property, especially cattle and houses, but to a lesser extent land too. We must remember that [241] in the early days Badagas practised swidden agriculture (although strangely that is not mentioned in the early ballads), and the Nilgiri population density was so low that land really had no market value there and was very easy to come by.

233 Now, keeping a herd of buffaloes requires adequate grazing and certain other conditions. One is the presence of a number of active men, typically brothers, who will keep the herd together while grazing and fend off tigers [539] when possible. Women could not do this work: the epic poem *Ba:le Sevane* [462] ridicules the mother of the hero for trying to drive the family's herd out to graze with a stick in her hand. Both swidden and ordinary plough agriculture 241 also called for the combined efforts of several men (as well as a number of 416 women), and so here too Badagas found a good reason for cultivating their 596 fields as a joint family. Many still do so today. The point to be noted is that both the buffalo-herding and ox-ploughing and swidden cultivation were economic conditions that favoured patrilocality, the joint family, and 182 brother/sister exchange at marriage—this latter a preference which maintained a balance of manpower between two intermarrying families or settlements. If a youth married his FZD and her brother in turn married *his* 581 MBD, brother/sister exchange would result, the ideal of cross-cousin mar- 582 riage would be honoured, the two families involved would have asserted their 583 equality, and close relations would ensue between them. Where brother/ 586 sister exchange has occurred, divorce becomes rather more difficult because it places great strains on the other couple, those who are not getting divorced.

591 The girls in this system invariably go off to another village in marriage 881 at or shortly after menarche, where they will be needed to *(a)* do house-work and look after small children; *(b)* do some sowing, weeding and reaping in 462 the fields; and *(c)* raise a new generation of farmers and buffalo herdsmen. In this married situation the birth of a son means that a woman has largely 602 fulfilled all three of her obligations to the family she has joined—for on [885] marriage a Badaga girl relinquishes membership in her natal family, lineage, [562] and village, and joins those of her husband. Her membership in them is made [851] especially manifest when her husband dies and a son continues to support her in her husband's village; and when she too dies it is her husband's village and its headman who are responsible for conducting her funeral, with the collaboration of her husband's family.

562 The economic decision-making rests with the adult men: when to sow, what to plant in each kind of soil, when and where to move the cattle in search of new grazing, when to harvest, and, in former times, when to move 182 the swidden. These decisions call for accurate topographical knowledge, and 562 it is thus both appropriate and necessary that the detailed local knowledge 591 which boys acquire in work and play should be put to good use when they

9: Natesa Sastri U-5 (no date) 1892
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the morning. Profusely the white fluid is poured till the whole rivulet is nothing but a stream of milk. After the *Liṅgas* are thus washed the boys give them to the priest, who places them in his left palm and, covering them with his right, utters, with all the solemnity due to the occasion, the following incantation, while the boys and the whole village assembled there listen to it with the most profound respect and veneration.

"Śiva Hara O! Basava
Pañchaṅgiri Adhipati
Âr sâvara kirttige mûru
sâvara andu lakṣha
tompattâru sâvara gaṇa—
galuke Nichyapâjya Kîr
koḍuva Nillammatâya
Śiva Liṅgavê guru pâda
Śiva, Śiva, Śiva, Śiva, Śiva,"

meaning:—O Śiva, Hara, Basava (different names of Śiva) the lord of all the six thousand and three thousand names and glories, the lord of one *lakh* and ninety-six thousand *gaṇas* (body-guards of Śiva), the donor of water, the daily-to-be-worshipped, the husband of Pârvati. O Lord, O Śiva Liṅga, thy feet alone are our resort, O Śiva, Śiva, Śiva, Śiva, Śiva.

While pronouncing this prayer the priest now and then removes his right palm, and pours water and milk round the sacred fire and over the *Liṅgas* resting in his left palm. The priest then places each of the *Liṅgas* in a cloth of one cubit square, rolls it up and requests the boys to hold out their right palms. The young Badaga receives it, repeats the prayer given above five times, and during each repetition the palm holding the *Liṅga* tied up in the cloth is carried nearer and nearer to his neck. When that is reached (and it is reached on the fifth utterance of the incantation) the priest ties up the ends of the rolled up cloth containing the Śiva emblem loosely round the boy's neck; while the latter is all the while kneeling down holding by both of his hands the feet of the priest. After the *Liṅga* has been tied the priest blesses him thus,

"Ondu sâvara hâgi ennu dina Śivaliṅgattâ kâpaḍi hâlu kâḍu ûṭâmâḍi kuḍi hechchi muḍi hechchi bayil hechchi payil hechchi sâvara kâla badukappâ buduku,"

meaning:—May one become one thousand to you; may you ever preserve in you the *Śivaliṅga*, and if you do so you will have plenty of milk and food, and you will prosper for one thousand years in name and fame, kine and corn.

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764 burning the dead. A calf is then given as a present to some of the agnatic kindred and the calf-given is a male or a female, according (431) as the person that is dead is a man or a woman. Then the corpse is carried on to the ground where it is to be buried or cremated. On the way the following recitation of sins of the dead is made with 539 prayer that they may be all excused. This almost amounts to the 782 *Sarvapráyaśchitta* of the Hindus, which however is performed when 764 the person is in his last stage and before his death, or the confession of the Roman Catholic Christians. The name of the dead party comes first; the sins are enumerated and pardon requested. Many enumerations are made according to the cleverness of the people 539 assembled. One such enumeration of the sins which are considered the most important is given below:—

Śevani śettadu śâvu
Bannige danakaru Jonnige
Teru Tirupadi onduge
Martiyalôgadandu
Mahâlôgaga payaṇa
Ivarê hettu hettappa mâḍiyadu
Ivare avvappa mâḍiyadu
Ivariddu mâḍiyadu
Sarvannûrû pâpa haṭṭaliyu
Basavanapâda sêdu hôgali
Aritamaga anna koḍadadu
Beratamaga bekki koḍadadu
Târi toriyanda maga kûḍa toriyadu
Anna tammana agala mâḍiyadu
Tiṭṭa tivara ottiyadu
Urida kichchaga uchchu hoydadu
Sarvannûrupapa haṭṭaliyu
Chinnada kambuga chôdu
Beḷḷiya kambuga oradu
Karaṃadu manê kaḍa muchchali
Darmada manega târi buḍali
Hûna bê muchchali
Mîlapâla bigêli
Saggada hadi tareli
Savundaru nireli
Andu koṭṭa Birumanapâda hiḍidu
Indu puṭṭu Basavanapâdu hiḍidu
Śiva bandânaga êrili Chorus *Hâgê,*

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539 which may be freely translated thus:—'This is the death of Śevani (a Baḍaga female). In memory of her, Jannige the she-calf of the buffalo Bannige is given in donation to atone for her sins. She goes now in a car from this mortal world to the great world (heaven). All the one hundred sins committed by the ancestors of this person, committed by the ancestors of the ancestors of this person, all the sins committed by this person herself, viz., not giving of cooked rice as food to the son in distress, the not giving of fire to the neighbour, the sin of having pointed out the wilderness, and so led into difficulty the son who wanted to know the way, the sin of having ruined brothers and sisters, the sin of having taken away others' property and houses, the pouring of water on a blazing fire—may all these one hundred sins be washed away by this person coming in contact with the gold pillar[1] and by her rubbing herself against the silver pillar.[1] May the door of the house of Karma (Fate) be shut up against this person. May the door of the house of Dharma (Meritoriousness) be open to this person. May the devils and other evil beings cease their mischief to this person. May the Mîlapâla thread become tight to enable the soul of this one to walk over it and reach the heavens. May the door of the world of happiness (Sagga-Svarga) be open to this person. May this person become resplendent with beauty, by taking hold of the feet of that Brahma,[2] and by taking hold of the feet of this Basava[2]. May this one reach the holy presence of Śiva.' All say 'May it be so.—Amen'.

764 Let us suppose that the burial-ground is reached, and that the Baḍaga in the case before us belongs to a caste that is accustomed to bury its dead. The eldest of the agnatic kindred fixes a crowbar on the south side of the corpse. All the other Baḍagas now join him in digging a big oblong pit to contain the dead body. The body is then taken round this pit and is placed in it with its face turned towards the north. Four twigs of the Apâmârga (Tamil Nâyuruvi—*Achyranthes aspera*) are planted at the four corners of this oblong pit. A lighted lamp made of cowdung and filled with oil is placed beside the head of the corpse and threads are passed diagonally

(824) (239) (812)

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(775) [1] Gold and silver pillars are supposed to exist in the other world and the soul of the dead by coming in contact with these is believed to wash away all its sins.

(776) [2] Gods in whom the Baḍagas believe in this world. Basava is regularly worshipped. Śiva is the highest god in their mythology and through the worship of Brahma and Basava they reach him in the end.

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778 787 (513) 764 quit the family. Thus a Baḍaga will never sleep with a light in his house, but before he goes to bed worships it and then carefully extinguishes it. A grand feast is given that night by the agnatic kindred or by a son of the dead person to which all come to eat. Both in the river and in the house the *Linga* is worshipped by the Baḍagas if they are of the Lingayat class.

The feast closes the first day's funeral rite of the Baḍagas. The second day's ceremony is a simple affair. It is what is called the pouring of the milk over the grave. On the morning of the second day the eldest mourner of the family starts to the burial place with five measures of the *Koraṭi* grain tied up in his cloth and a big new pot containing milk.

Worship is performed to the stone placed in the middle of the grave and the milk from the new pot is poured over it. The son pours it first and then the others follow him in turn. Each of those assembled there then takes up a handful of the *Koraṭi* grain and pronouncing the words *Avvappane seru*—'Mix yourself with your forefathers'—they cast it over the middle stone all at once. All then march round from south to north and touch the five (302) stones. They then proceed to the river, where, after having been shaved—even their moustaches are removed as an indication of their deep mourning,—they all bathe. They then worship the *Linga* there and return home where the same act of worship is again performed, and this brings to a conclusion the ceremonies of the second day.

The third day is a very important day and the funeral rites of the dead may be said to close with it. At 1 A.M. on that day four plantain leaves, four measures of rice, four measures of bean-seed and four new pots are made ready in the dead man's house. All (415) gather there round a *Kerachi*—a bronze pan used for frying grain, &c. Paddy is poured into this *Kerachi* by the agnatic kindred and by a son of the dead person, while five females, the wife not joining, stir it up with reaping hooks. The *Kerachi* is already placed upon a lighted fire; and while the paddy is thus being turned up the wife mourns outside with loud wailings. A handful of straw from the outside thatch of the house is brought in and lighted up in the hall —*edirmane*. The four new pots, four plantain leaves, &c., are passed over it. Five or three youngsters hold the pots, while the (782) (539) elders utter the following prayer:—

Hâl hechchali hap hechchali
Kuḍi hechchali payil hechchali,

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764 (782) (539) 'May milk increase, money increase, offspring increase, and harvest increase'. The pots are then passed over the fire and thereafter taken to the river. Fresh water is fetched; the paddy is husked and the rice is cooked with salt and plantains without milk. The cooked food is now placed on the four plantain leaves. All bathe as soon as the cocks are heard crowing, worship the *Liṅga* or light, as the case may be, and deposit the food spread on the plantain leaves in the *Hâgôṭu*—milk room. All the people assembled stand outside. The eldest member of the village asks the question whether all are in attendance for the occasion—*Ellâru bandiddârâ*. 'Yes' is the reply, when the following prayer is uttered :—

539 (782) (764)

Endunâ dinadu
Naṅga muttavar naṭaku
Bettavar naṭaku
Naṅga Naḍadanu
Hostu haḷadallu
Haḷedu hostalla,
Talai hottu gaṇḍillu
Mola hottu heṇṇillâ.
Jâtiki śêrili.
Janaka śêrili kulakke śêrili
Kôvû

which may be freely translated thus:—'We have acted now as our forefathers and the forefathers of those forefathers acted. Neither new nor old rites have we performed now; but only those which were observed from time immemorial. No man or woman lives for ever. May this individual mingle then with his creed and clan and may he live happy in the other world'. All utter this. Then the eldest member eats a handful of rice and the others also do the same in their turn. This eating is called the eating of the *Hiṇḍiya kûḷu*—the tasting of the funeral rice and is considered a great sign of attachment and caste union. He who does not partake of this rice is neither a good friend nor a relation, which fact has been crystallized into a proverb :—

764 (782) (539)

538 [764]

Hiṇḍiya kûḷu timbuvavanô
Setta kula ettuvavana nî endu adhiya.

'What are you, you fool? Are you one who has partaken of the funeral rice with me, or one who has with me accompanied the dead body!' This is said of one who, without showing in these practical ways the attachment that should exist between relations, pretends

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the meaning of it from the analogy of Hindu custom; it is to keep the body and soul together till the ceremonies are over. Why it is not done to the dead bodies of men, it is difficult to understand.

When thus the body is placed on the pile the nearest relative—the son in case there is one—takes a handful of burning fuel from the big pile which has been kept burning and applies it to the head of the pile with the following incantation :—

Hetta hettappa
Muttê muttappa mâdida dharmânda
Ennavvê nappaga nâ huṭṭi
Ennavê (or appa) ṣetta ṣâvugê
Nâ tappadê tale koṭṭi bittanê
Saraṇnurû Dêva ariya,

meaning :—'According to the course adopted by my ancestors and the ancestors of those ancestors, I, in justice to my having been begotten by my father and mother, and without failing to do what is needful, now ignite the funeral pile of my mother (or father) at the head, while all the hundred gods bear witness to it'. This is called *Take-Koṭṭi*—igniting the pile at the head. These are the chief differences in the first day's ceremony in the case of cremating the body, but it should be observed that no stones are placed as in the case of burials.

There is more difference in the ceremonies of the second day between cremation and burial. In cases where cremation has taken place the nearest agnatic relation goes to the burning ground on the following morning with five measures of *korali*, and a small quantity of ghee in a cup, made of the leaves of the castor oil plant. All the villagers follow him with new pots. Water is brought and poured over the pile. The bones are collected and placed on wild ferns, and ghee is mixed with the bones. Three persons hold the bones in their extended hands, while all the persons who have assembled there stand in a row. The bones are passed round and every one touches them by way of respect and throws over them *korali* grain with the following incantation :—

Sâvu nilili
Kêḍu nilili
Sakala oṭṭidu âgali
Muttê muttappara dharmandavu
Betta bettappara dharmandavu
Baga Bandigi soṛali;

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764 (539) 'May deaths cease, may sorrows cease, may everything be for our good; by the meritoriousness of our ancestors and by the meritoriousness of the ancestors of our ancestors. May this person (that has died) mingle with them':

After the bones have thus been passed round they are taken by (539) the three who displayed them and buried in a pit built of stone in the cremation ground with the following incantation:—

Doḍḍavar kunnavar śatti hatta
Akâlânda ikâlaga śattavakar śatti hatta
Kûṭṭâ kuṭumba ellâ ondâgi hoḷali

'May the young and the old that have died, may all persons who have died from time immemorial up to the present time—may all these mingle into one'.

There is no difference at all as to the ceremonies observed on the third day. Those Baḍagas who cremate their dead perform exactly the same ceremonies on that day as those who bury.

121 We have thus examined as far as is possible the origin of the Baḍagas, and have seen that they are most probably immigrants from Maisûr. We have noticed the chief characteristics of the race and have traced a Baḍaga from his birth to his funeral. It has not been possible to give an account of all the ceremonies and customs of this interesting people but the main ones have been described, and it will be seen that they are essentially those of an agricultural people. It has been seen how prominent a place the buffalo and 796 the *Hâgôṭu* or milk-house hold in their religious ceremonies. To 241 those already mentioned may be added the ceremony which takes place at the beginning of harvest when the first bundle of ripe ears of corn is brought home, husked, cooked with milk, placed in the 181 *Hâgôṭu* and eaten. The wants of the Baḍaga are few and his aspirations may be summed up in the following words:—*Kattadda erumê kareli bitta holu ellâ belêli:* 'May our buffaloes give us calves and may the fields yield us harvest'.

S. M. Natesa Sastri.